

THE ARGOSY

AUGUST 1900

NIGHT IN THE DESERT

AN ELEGY AT HELOUAN

NIGHT in the secret East unlocks her doors ;
Quickly the leaden-coloured sluice she pours,
Surging, the arabesque of sunset drowns,
The whips and fans the scarlet scarves and crowns,
The parting sun with fiery pencil scrawls
Upon the enamelled heaven. Full she falls
On the old and awful Desert, blind and dead,
With dews and rains for mockery idly fed,
Between the dun hills and the shining river
Who lags his far-fetched burden to deliver ;
An urn of meditative dusk she spills
Into the vessel of the Arabian hills,
And blurs the melancholy Pyramids :
My gazing eyes grow weak to lift their lids.

This way perhaps the swarthy slaveries went,
Myriad-footed, creeping at the rope,
A monstrous man-compacted instrument,
Sweet lives made misery for an idle hope
Of sovereignty in death, to heave one pile
A little higher than the rest, awhile
Longer defer the inevitable dust,
And build *Not yet, not yet!* against *Thou must.*

And look, his grave is fly-blown by the mob,
Eager to scan, to desecrate, to rob;
The secret of his sepulchre proclaimed
To every curious alien unashamed;
And, with his vessels and his gems, himself
Obscenely pilloried on a showroom shelf!

Happier than this the unregarded slave
Who dropped aweary in a nameless grave;
Happier the poor whose cemetery fills
Yon bay among the brown Arabian hills,
Each with a pair of tutelary stones
Presiding, head and feet, to watch his bones:
And when the suns that suck the Desert's veins,
When brush of winds and quiet biting rains,
Which seem to do no hurt and never spare,
Disperse the weak memorial on the air,

Better to know thy former human heart
And all that loved laborious mortal part
Drift from the mouldering ark to meet the sand
And pass incorporate with thy native land!
The stone, the tree, the fountain—these shall be
A quiet anchor for the soul of thee
Riding the harbour-calms at home and free!

Dim as the card-built cities of a dream
The sprawling hovels of the hamlet gleam;
Quick through the dusk the starry needles quiver
Upon the dun hills and the shoaling river.

JOHN SWINNERTON PHILLIMORE.

MANACLED

BY STEPHEN CRANE

IN the First Act there had been a farm scene, wherein real horses had drunk real water out of real buckets, afterward dragging a real waggon off stage, L. The audience was consumed with admiration of this play, and the great Theatre Nouveau rang to its roof with the crowd's plaudits.

The Second Act was now well advanced. The hero, cruelly victimised by his enemies, stood in prison garb, panting with rage, while two brutal warders fastened real handcuffs on his wrists and real anklets on his ankles. And the hovering villain sneered.

"'Tis well, Aubrey Pettingill," said the prisoner. "You have so far succeeded; but, mark you, there will come a time——"

The villain retorted with a cutting allusion to the young lady whom the hero loved.

"Curse you," cried the hero, and he made as if to spring upon this demon; but, as the pitying audience saw, he could only take steps four inches long.

Drowning the mocking laughter of the villain came cries from both the audience and the people back of the wings. "Fire! Fire! Fire!" Throughout the great house resounded the roaring crashes of a throng of human beings moving in terror, and even above this noise could be heard the screams of women more shrill than whistles. The building hummed and shook; it was like a glade which holds some bellowing cataract of the mountains. Most of the people who were killed on the stairs still clutched their play-bills in their hands as if they had resolved to save them at all costs.

The Theatre Nouveau fronted upon a street which was not of the first importance, especially at night, when it only aroused when the people came to the theatre and aroused again when they came out to go home. On the night of the fire, at the time of the scene between the enchained hero and his tormentor, the thoroughfare echoed with only the scraping shovels of some street-cleaners, who were loading carts with blackened snow and mud. The gleam of lights made the shadowed pavement deeply blue, save where lay some yellow plum-like reflection.

Suddenly a policeman came running frantically along the street. He charged upon the fire-box on a corner. Its red light touched with flame each of his brass buttons and the municipal shield. He pressed a lever. He had been standing in the entrance of the theatre chatting

to the lonely man in the box-office. To send an alarm was a matter of seconds.

Out of the theatre poured the first hundreds of fortunate ones, and some were not altogether fortunate. Women, their bonnets flying, cried out tender names; men, white as death, scratched and bleeding, looked wildly from face to face. There were displays of horrible blind brutality by the strong. Weaker men clutched and clawed like cats. From the theatre itself came the howl of a gale.

The policeman's fingers had flashed into instant life and action the most perfect counter-attack to the fire. He listened for some seconds, and presently he heard the thunder of a charging engine. She swept around a corner, her three shining enthralled horses leaping. Her consort, the hose-cart, roared behind her. There were the loud clicks of the steel-shod hoofs, hoarse shouts, men running, the flash of lights, while the crevice-like streets resounded with the charges of other engines.

At the first cry of fire, the two brutal warders had dropped the arms of the hero and run off the stage with the villain. The hero cried after them angrily. "Where you going? Here, Pete—Tom—you've left me chained up, damn you!"

The body of the theatre now resembled a mad surf amid rocks, but the hero did not look at it. He was filled with fury at the stupidity of the two brutal warders, in forgetting that they were leaving him manacled. Calling loudly, he hobbled off stage, L, taking steps four inches long.

Behind the scenes he heard the hum of flames. Smoke, filled with sparks sweeping on spiral courses, rolled thickly upon him. Suddenly his face turned chalk-colour beneath his skin of manly bronze for the stage. His voice shrieked. "Pete—Tom—damn you—come back—you've left me chained up."

He had played in this theatre for seven years, and he could find his way without light through the intricate passages which mazed out behind the stage. He knew that it was a long way to the street door.

The heat was intense. From time to time masses of flaming wood sung down from above him. He began to jump. Each jump advanced him about three feet, but the effort soon became heart-breaking. Once he fell, and it took time to get upon his feet again.

There were stairs to descend. From the top of this flight he tried to fall feet first. He precipitated himself in a way that would have broken his hip under common conditions. But every step seemed covered with glue, and on almost every one he stuck for a moment. He could not even succeed in falling down stairs. Ultimately he reached the bottom, windless from the struggle.

There were stairs to climb. At the foot of the flight he lay for an instant with his mouth close to the floor trying to breathe. Then he tried to scale this frightful precipice up the face of which many an actress had gone at a canter.

Each succeeding step arose eight inches from its fellow. The hero dropped to a seat on the third step, and pulled his feet to the second step. From this position he lifted himself to a seat on the fourth step. He had not gone far in this manner before his frenzy caused him to lose his balance, and he rolled to the foot of the flight. After all, he could fall downstairs.

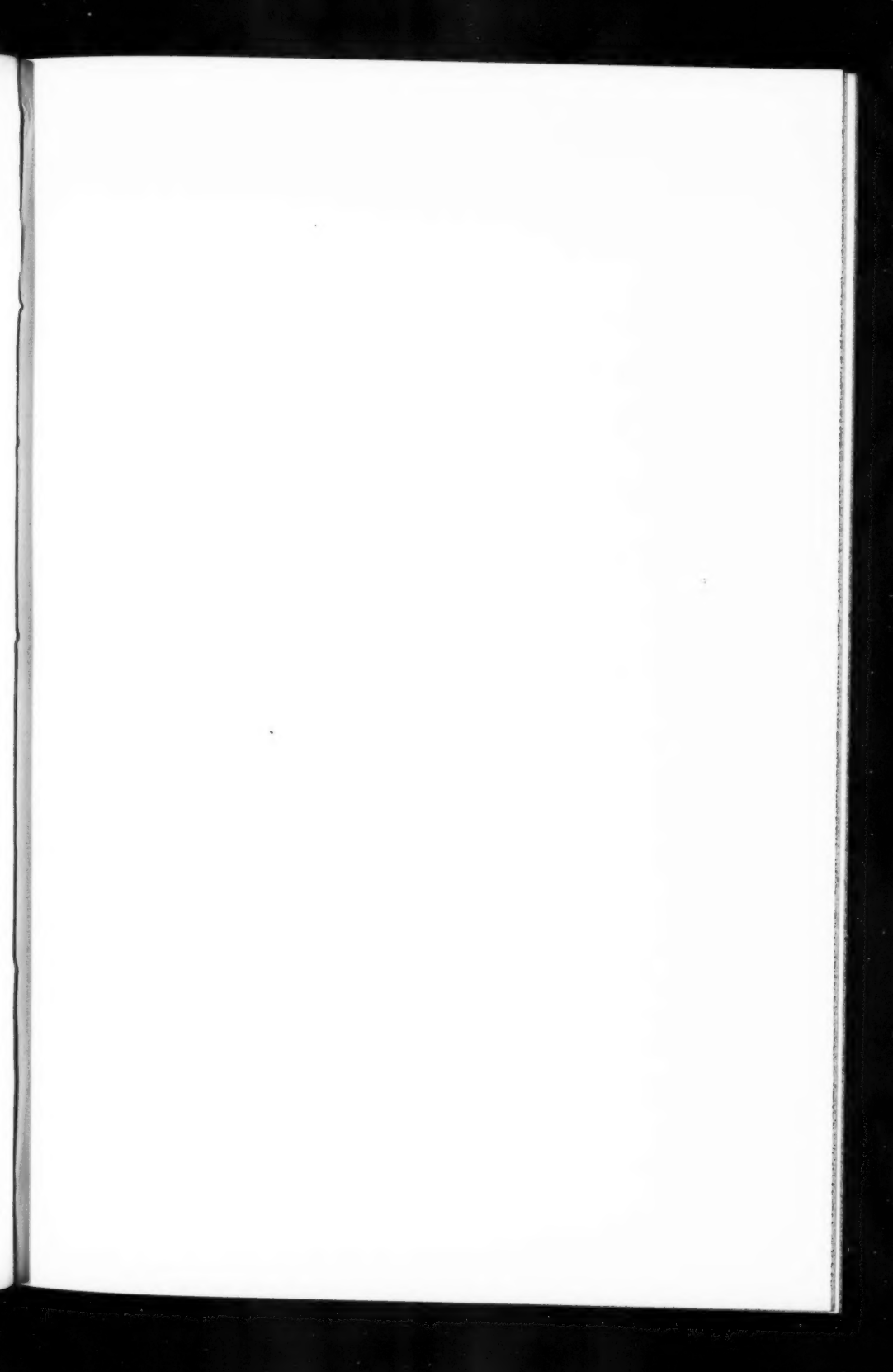
He lay there whispering. "They all got out but I. All but I." Beautiful flames flashed above him, some were crimson, some were orange, and here and there were tongues of purple, blue, green.

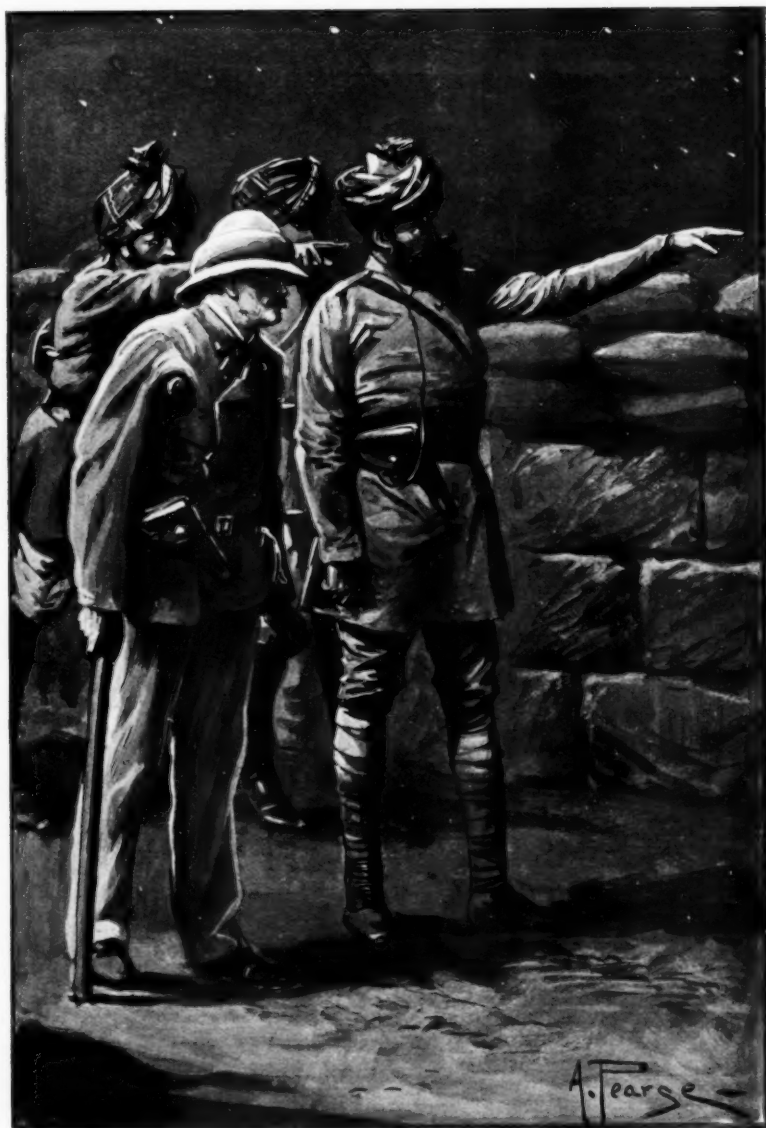
A curiously calm thought came into his head. "What a fool I was not to foresee this! I shall have Rogers furnish manacles of papier-mâché to-morrow."

The thunder of the fire-lions made the theatre have a palsy.

Suddenly the hero beat his handcuffs against the wall, cursing them in a loud wail. Blood started from under his finger-nails. Soon he began to bite the hot steel, and blood fell from his blistered mouth. He raved like a wolf.

Peace came to him again. There were charming effects amid the flames. . . . He felt very cool, delightfully cool. . . . "They've left me chained up."





"He rides!"

THE WARDEN OF THE MARCHES

By SYDNEY C. GRIER, AUTHOR OF "PEACE WITH HONOUR,"
"THE KINGS OF THE EAST," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER XV

"THE OLD FIRST HEROIC LESSONS"

WHY, Mrs. North!" Disturbed in his task of supervising the proceedings of a nervous native assistant, whose mind was less occupied with his dispensing than with the bullets which flattened themselves every now and then upon the pavement outside the surgery, Dr. Tighe turned suddenly to find Georgia at his elbow. "Can I do anything for you?" he asked kindly, looking with professional disapproval at her pale face and weary eyes.

"I want you to let me help you in the hospital."

"And I thought you were a sensible woman! Will you tell me if you call this wise, now?"

"I think it would help me to have something to do."

"But not this. What am I to say to the Major when—if—when I see him again, if you overtask your strength?"

"I see you think I am mad," she said earnestly, "but I *know* he is alive. But the suspense is so dreadful, doctor. It's certain that he is wounded, and I can scarcely doubt he is a prisoner, and what may be happening to him at any moment? It is killing me, and I must live—for both their sakes." The doctor nodded quickly. "And I thought if I could do something to help those who were suffering as he is, it might—oh, I don't know, it might make me tired enough to sleep again."

"A good idea!" said Dr. Tighe, in his most matter-of-fact tones. "You shall relieve me of half my dressings, by all means, and I'll turn over to you the out-patient work among these unfortunate women and children. You can leave that dispensing, Babu"—the assistant, who had been counting the thuds of the bullets, started violently—"and go round the wards with the Memsahib."

From his own cases on the opposite side of the improvised wards, Dr. Tighe glanced across now and then at Georgia, remarking with approval that her face and figure were losing their look of utter weariness as she went about her work. She was giving her whole mind to it, that was evident, and for the time her own anxiety was pushed into the background. The number of patients to be treated was considerable, for besides the men who had been wounded at the

fight in the Akrah Pass, there were a good many casualties due to the enemy's fire since the siege had begun. The work was therefore heavy, but as soon as the dressings were completed, Dr. Tighe bustled up to Georgia and pointed out a new opening for her energies.

"The Colonel wants sacks made—millions of 'em—for sandbags," he said. "He was at his wits' end about it this morning, tried to get the native women to sew them, and they wouldn't."

"Oh, why didn't he ask us?" cried Georgia. "We would work our fingers to the bone."

"I'm sure you would, and it's likely he would ask it of you, isn't it? But why all the refugees should have board and lodging given them free, I don't know. Why, they wouldn't even make the sacks for payment! A lot of them said they couldn't sew, and the rest seemed to think they were being insulted when they were asked to do it. But you know how to get round them, Mrs. North. We can't very well say that if a woman doesn't sew a sack a day, out she goes—sounds a bit brutal—but you'll manage to set them to work, I'm sure. I'll tell Colonel Graham you've taken the matter in hand, and he'll be for ever grateful."

Unpromising though the task seemed, Georgia succeeding in finding six women who consented to work, if the Memsahibs would do so too, and a working-party was organised in the little courtyard, from which Mr. Hardy and the men-servants were rigorously banished for the time. Since the need of sandbags—in such numbers, at any rate—had not been foreseen, the proper material was lacking, but all the tents in the fort were promptly requisitioned, that their coverings might be utilised for the purpose. The regimental tailors cut out the sacks, delivering them into the charge of Rahah, and inside the courtyard Mrs. Hardy and Georgia superintended the unskilled workers, while Flora and Mabel took a pride in proving their willingness to blister their fingers for their country. It was fortunate that fine needlework was not required, for the native women's ideas of sewing were rudimentary in the extreme, but their two instructresses succeeded at last, by precept and example, in convincing them that to sew one side only of a seam was unnecessary as a decoration and not calculated materially to enhance the usefulness of a sack. When this lesson had been sufficiently impressed upon her pupils, Georgia sat down in the doorway of her room to divide the *pice* which Colonel Graham had intrusted to her for distribution among them. The sun was setting over the hill beyond the fort, and the women, as they sat cross-legged on the floor, seized the fact that the light was in their eyes as an excuse for turning round to gaze greedily at the money which Georgia was apportioning on a chair. Suddenly there was a whizz and a noisy clatter. A bullet had grazed Georgia's hand and struck the chair, sending the coins flying, and it was followed by a burst of firing, which caused the terrified workwomen to drop their sacks and exclaim with one voice that they were dead.

"Down! down!" cried Georgia, setting the example herself, "and crawl round to the other verandah. They are firing from the hill, but they won't be able to see us there."

Dragging with her one woman who was paralysed with fright, she persuaded the others to follow her, and when they were out of the line of fire, proceeded to examine the terrific wounds from which they all declared themselves to be suffering. Curiously enough, no one was badly hurt. Two had scratches, and one a nasty bruise from a ricochet shot, but of severe injuries there were none. Georgia dressed the wounds and comforted the sufferers with one or two *pice* extra, and then sent them back to their own quarters, thus allowing admittance to Colonel Graham, Mr. Hardy, the Commissioner, and Fitz, who had been informed by the horrified servants that the enemy were firing into the Memsahibs' courtyard. Their anxiety raised to the highest pitch by the shrieks from within, the four gentlemen were heroically held at bay in the passage by Rahah, who informed them that they must pass over her body before they should break the *pardah* of the women assembled under her mistress's protection. Just as they were at last admitted, a cry from behind made them look round, to see an unfortunate water-carrier who had been passing along the rampart falling into the courtyard.

"We must get up a parados on that side," said Colonel Graham. "They command the inside of the whole eastern curtain from that hill. Your sandbags will be made useful sooner than you expected, Mrs. North."

"But what is to happen to us?" cried Mabel. "Are we to stay here and be shot at?"

"Calm yourself, my dear girl," said Mr. Burgrave, in gently reproving tones. "You are in no danger at the present moment."

"You see, Miss North," said the Colonel, "this court is so small that the enemy can't possibly command more than the east side, and we'll put that right by hanging curtains along the verandah."

"Why, what good would that be against bullets?"

"The curtain wouldn't stop them, certainly, but our friends up there are very careful of their ammunition, and never waste a shot. Not being able to see whether any one is in the verandah, they won't aim at it. It was the sight of a whole party assembled there that was irresistible."

"But is Georgia to live in darkness?" demanded Georgia's self-constituted champion.

"Nonsense, Mab! there are three other verandahs to sit in. After all, one expects bullets in a siege."

"That's the right spirit, Mrs. North," said Colonel Graham heartily. "As soon as it's dusk, we'll have the matting up from the club-house—messroom, I mean—floor, and nail it along this verandah and across the corner where the passage is. Then you'll be safe from anything but chance shots, and those, I'm afraid, we can none of us guard against."

"But are those fellows up there to pot at the ladies without our ever having a chance to pay them back, sir?" cried Fitz.

"I was coming to that. No doubt the plan is to clear us off the east rampart, so that a force from the town may rush it under cover of the fire from the hill, and therefore the parados must be our first care. Still, I think we can spare a few sand-bags for the two western towers, and if we arrange a little sangar on the top of each when it is dark, to-morrow we can show our chivalrous friends the snipers what it feels like to be sniped. Tell Winlock to set all the servants to work at once filling bags and baskets and anything else they can find with earth."

"We seem to hold our own fairly well at present," said Mr. Burggrave, as Fitz departed, and the Colonel stood looking narrowly at the threatened verandah and the scattered work-materials with which it was strewn.

"We seem to—yes, but it is simply because we have not been tried as yet. There is far too great an extent of wall for us to hold against a well-planned attack—say from two sides at once. Why they haven't put us to the test before I can't imagine. It's not like them to let things drag on in this way."

"I am of opinion that they dislike the cleared space, and intend to remain at a discreet distance and starve us out. If only they stick to that, we ought to be relieved long before matters come to a crisis."

"No, it's not that!" cried the Colonel irritably. "There's something behind that we don't see. If there was any possibility of their getting guns, I should say they were waiting for them. But where are they to get them from, unless they have surprised Rahmat-Ullah, which we have no reason to suppose? They have some dodge on hand, though, I'm certain."

"Is there any weak point at which they could be aiming?"

"Man, this place is nothing but weak points. If those fellows on the hill knew what they were about, they could enfilade our north and south ramparts as well as cover that on the east. The south curtain is so weak now that an elephant or a battering-ram—let alone a well-planted shell or two—might knock it over, and the canal on that side is getting lower every day. The water-carriers have to go down a dozen steps now, and it's only the enemy's fear for their own precious skins that prevents their picking them off from the opposite bank. We could pepper them from the rampart, they know that, and they haven't the sense to pour in an oblique fire from the hill. I suppose, too, it hasn't occurred to you that if they took it into their heads to blow us up, one or two bold fellows could get close up to the walls under cover of a general attack, and lay a train at their leisure. It's impossible to fire transversely from the loopholes in the towers without exposing pretty nearly one's whole body, and as to depressing a rifle and firing pointblank down from the parapet, well——"

Mr. Burggrave understood the pause to mean that the consequences

would probably be very uncomfortable for the holder of the rifle, and said no more. The night passed without further alarm, save that Georgia found it would be dangerous to have a light in her rooms unless door and shutters were both closed. The glimmer from the window, even when seen through the matting curtain, attracted two or three bullets immediately, and it was evident that the choice must be made between air and light. During the hours of darkness the besieged worked hard at their defences, and succeeded in erecting a more or less effectual shelter along the inside of the east rampart, and also a sandbag parapet at the summit of the two western towers. The gateway turrets on the north-east, which were now exposed to the fire from the hill in the rear as well as that from General Keeling's house in front, were strengthened in the same way. Behind these shelters the best marksmen of the garrison took up their posts, and as soon as the bullets began to fly from the hill, seized the opportunity of pointing out to the enemy that things had changed to some extent in the night. Since it was impossible for any man on either side to fire without exposing himself slightly, a return shot was the instant comment on this imprudence, and hence, before the morning was over, both parties were lying low and glaring at their opponents' sangars, ready to shoot but not caring to be shot. Helmets on the one side and turbans on the other, raised cautiously on rifle-barrels above the breastwork, drew a few shots, but the nature of the trick was quickly perceived by both parties, and the sniping continued to languish.

"Their rifles seem to carry as far as ours," remarked Mr. Burgrave to Colonel Graham.

"So they ought," was the grim reply. "Most of them, if not all, have been ours. They are stolen and smuggled wholesale into Ethiopia, and Bahram Khan has borrowed them to arm his followers with. That's how they manage to give us so much trouble. In the matchlock days, when this place was built, we could have laughed at their shooting from the hill."

"What is that?" said the Commissioner suddenly, putting up his eye-glass; "a pile of cannon-balls? It was not there last night."

They were standing in one of the gateway turrets, and the heap to which he pointed was visible upon the cleared space, in front of the entrance to a lane between two of the houses occupied by the enemy. Colonel Graham laid down his field-glass with an exclamation of disgust.

"Cannon-balls? It's *heads*—human heads—heads of our men. Those fiends have surprised one of our posts—Sultanibagh probably, beyond Shah Nawaz. I telegraphed to the Jemadar in charge to retire upon Rahmat-Ullah, as there was no chance of their getting here safely, but the wires must have been cut before they got the message, or they have been ambushed on their way. Well, Bahram Khan has put himself beyond the pale of mercy this time, even with our Government, I should imagine."

As the light grew stronger, the sickening trophy had been perceived from other parts of the fort, and the men of the Khemistan Horse were becoming impatient. It appeared that a deserter had ventured close under the walls in the night, and taunted the garrison with some unexplained reverse, the nature of which was now made manifest. They were asked how long Sinjā Kilin's sowars had been content to hide behind stone walls, instead of coming out to fight on horseback in the open, and a variety of interesting and savoury information was added as to the precise nature of the tortures in store for all, whether officers or men, who fell into Bahram Khan's hands. To the men who had so long dominated the frontier, this abuse was particularly galling, and the troopers were gathering in corners with sullen faces, and asking one another why they were withheld from washing out the disgrace in blood. They had now been in the fort the best part of a week, no attack in force had been made, and yet there had not been any attempt to drive off the enemy or inflict any loss upon him. Ressaldar Badullah Khan voiced this feeling to Colonel Graham a little later, when the Colonel had passed with a judicious lack of apparent notice the scowling groups of men who were discussing the state of affairs.

"Our faces are black, sahib," said the native officer, in response to the question put to him. "Bahram Khan and his *badmashes* laugh at our beards, and we are pent up here like women. We are better men than they—we have proved it in every fight since Sinjā Kilin Sahib first raised the regiment—why then (so say the sowars) is it forbidden to us to issue forth with our horses, and sweep the base-born rabble outside from the face of the earth?"

"Is the regiment criticising the course I choose to pursue, Ressaldar?"

"Nay, sahib; the sowars say that it is the will of the Kumpsioner Sahib which is being done."

"They are wrong. It is mine. What could the regiment do on horseback in the streets of the town, with the enemy firing from roofs and loopholes? We have not a man too many in the fort now, and yet, Ressaldar, I anticipate a sortie in force before long, though not in review order."

The Ressaldar's eyes gleamed. "May the news be told to the regiment, sahib?" he asked.

"Could they refrain from shouting it to the next man who taunts them? No, Ressaldar; tell them to trust me as they have always done hitherto. There will be work to be done before many days, but I cannot set mutinous men to do it."

Badullah Khan went out, meeting Woodworth on the threshold.

"Would you mind coming up to the north-western tower, sir?" asked the adjutant, when he had closed the door. "The enemy seem to be doing something in that direction which I can't quite make out."

"What sort of thing?" asked Colonel Graham, rising.

"I would rather not give an opinion until you have seen what there

is to see, sir," was the reply, so unwontedly cautious that the Colonel prepared to receive a heavy blow. Woodworth followed him up the narrow winding stairs in silence, and pointed to the stretch of desert on the northern side of the town, across which two long strings of men and animals were slowly passing in a westerly direction. The Colonel started, examined the moving objects through his field-glass, and called to his orderly—

"Ask Beltring Sahib to come here at once."

Almost before Beltring, breathless, had mounted the staircase, he was greeted by a question. "Beltring, are there any guns at Nalapur?"

"No, sir. At least, there are two old field-pieces in front of the palace, but that's all."

"Are they in working order?"

"They use them for firing salutes, sir, not for anything else, I believe."

"Still, that shows they are safe to work, and here they are. Where will they mount them, should you say, Woodworth?"

"On the hill, sir. The slope on the far side is comparatively easy for getting them up."

"True, and from the brow there they could knock the place about our ears in a couple of hours. At all costs we must keep them from getting the range to-day. They will have no range-finders, that's one good thing, and if we can secure a night's respite, it'll be a pity if we don't make good use of it. Tell our marksmen to fire at anything they see moving up there. Those guns must not be placed in position before sunset. And then tell all the other officers and volunteers to meet me on the south rampart immediately."

The council of war which assembled on the rampart, sheltered by the south-western tower, was sufficiently informal to make the hair of any stickler for military etiquette stand on end, but its proceedings were severely practical. The Colonel, beside whom stood Mr. Burgrave, stated the situation briefly.

"You have seen the two guns which the enemy intend to mount on the hill there. Once they get them into position and find our range, we may as well retire into the vaults at once, and wait until we are smoked out, for there is no possible shelter above ground. With our small force it is hopeless to detach a party to sally out and capture the guns in the open—more especially since the enemy hold the town between us and them. Still, they have plenty to do in getting the guns across the canal and dragging them up the hill, and we must make it our business to prevent them from opening fire to-day, and to-night those guns must be captured. I propose to leave the Commissioner in charge of the fort, with ten of his own Sikhs and fifty sowars under Ressaldar Ghulam Rasul. Every civilian that can hold a weapon must also do duty. I shall take a hundred and fifty dismounted sowars and thirty Sikhs, with all the enrolled volunteers, and make a dash for the hill under cover of the darkness. If we

succeed, we shall have averted a great danger; if we fail, the fort will be no worse off than if we had hung about and done nothing. I am confident that the Commissioner will fight to the end, and not be tempted by any offer of terms."

"Know the beggars too well," said Mr. Burgrave.

"That's the main scheme. Now for details. To reach the hill, the canal must be crossed in any case. The most obvious plan would undoubtedly be for the force to rendezvous silently in the shadow of the western curtain, traverse the irrigated land, and restore the bridge at the foot of the hill sufficiently to get across it. But the enemy could sweep the whole route from their position in the town, and they will be very much on the alert to-night. My idea is to cross the canal here from the water-gate, and march the first part of the distance on the bank, so as to come upon the enemy from the side he won't expect us. He knows we have neither boat nor bridge, and the water is still deep enough at this point to be impassable to any but good swimmers."

"Then how do you propose to cross?" asked Mr. Burgrave.

"There I must invite suggestions. We have no time for building boats or bridges, and the water-gate offers no facilities for it either. A raft, possibly. What do you think, Runcorn?"

"A raft supported on inflated skins, sir?" asked the engineer officer. "That might be possible, but it would have to be very small, for the passage to the gate is so narrow that all the materials must be taken to the water's edge separately and put together there. There is no standing-ground of any sort but the primitive steps that the water-carriers use, so that we can't well lower things from the wall."

"And the time spent in ferrying the force over would be interminable, not to mention the risk of discovery by the enemy," said Colonel Graham.

His subordinates looked at one another. Various suggestions had been hazarded and rejected, when a hesitating voice made itself heard. Mr. Hardy, who had joined the group a few minutes earlier, with a message to the Colonel from one of the wounded officers in the hospital, was the speaker.

"In my Oxford days," he said, "I remember a pleasant walk through the meadows." His hearers gasped. Why should these peaceful recollections be obtruded at such a moment? "There was one point at which the path crossed a considerable stream, and a punt that ran on wires was placed there. I'm afraid I am not very intelligible," he smiled nervously. "I can't describe the mechanism in technical language, but the punt was fastened to one wire, and the other was free, so that you could pull yourself across, or draw the punt towards you if it happened to be at the opposite bank."

"Padri," said Colonel Graham, "it's clear that you are an unsuspected mechanical genius. This is the very thing we want, using rope instead of wire."

"But we have even got that, sir," said Runcorn eagerly. "Timson

was boasting that he had saved all the stores of his department—miles of telegraph-wire amongst them. Now he'll have to disgorge."

"Then will you set about the construction of the ferry, Runcorn? You can't begin work on the spot until night, but you can get your materials ready. Requisition anything you want, of course."

"May we make a suggestion, sir?" said Fitz Anstruther, coming forward with Winlock as the council broke up. Signals of intelligence had been passing between the two for some time, and they had held a whispered consultation while the ferry was being discussed.

"Why, what plot have you on hand?"

It was Winlock who answered. "We thought that it might make all the difference to your success, sir, if a diversion could be arranged, to distract the enemy's attention. We two know every foot of these hills from *chikar*-shooting, and if we might pick out a dozen or so of the sowars who have constantly gone with us as beaters, we could carry out a sham attack. We know of a splendid place on the side of a hill, inaccessible from below, which commands the camp of the hostile tribes, and we thought if we sent up a signal rocket or two, to be answered from the fort, and then poured in as many volleys as there was time for, it might make a good impression. Of course, as soon as they try to get round us and rush the hill, we must retire, to keep them from finding out how few we are; but the main force ought to have settled the guns by that time, and we might rendezvous on the hill and march back together."

"It sounds feasible," said the Colonel slowly; "but how do you propose to cross the canal?"

"We don't mean to cross it in going, sir. Anstruther says we can clamber along the base of this wall from the water-gate round the south-western tower, so as to get on to dry land under the west curtain."

"I know it's possible, sir," said Fitz eagerly. "I've done it more than once when the canal was low, and it'll be easier now that the bricks are so much washed away. And of course we shall be very careful in crossing the irrigated land—all of us in khaki, you see, and taking advantage of every bit of cover—and unless we run right into one of the enemy's outposts, I don't see how they are to spot us. And think of the benefit it will be to have their attention distracted from your movement!"

"You realise that you are taking your lives in your hands? You will probably have to swim the canal higher up to join us, and after all, we may not be able to wait for you. Your men will be volunteers, of course? They must understand that it's a desperate business."

"Yes, sir, but they'll come like a shot. They've been out with us after *markhor*, and we've been in some tight places in the mountains. May we have what rockets we want?"

"By all means. Good luck go with you! I wish I was coming too."

"That's really handsome of the C. O.," said Fitz, dodging a bullet as he clattered down the stairs into the courtyard with Winlock. "Grand firework display to-night! What a pity that the ladies and all the refugees can't have front seats on the ramparts to watch the *tamasha*!"

CHAPTER XVI

THE DARKEST HOUR

SAHIB, there is a man under the wall on the east side."

"How did he come there?" demanded Colonel Graham angrily. "What are the sentries thinking off?"

"The night is so dark, sahib, that he crept up unnoticed. He is the holy mullah Aziz-ud-Din, and desires speech with your honour."

"The Amir's mullah? You are sure of it?"

"I know his voice, sahib. He is holding his hands on high, to show that he has no weapons."

"I suppose we may as well see what he has to say," said the Colonel to Mr. Burgrave, with whom he had been making final arrangements, and the two men climbed the stairs to the eastern rampart. Once there, and looking over into the darkness, it was some little time before their eyes could distinguish the dim figure at the foot of the wall.

"Peace!" said Colonel Graham.

"It is peace, sahib. I bear the words of the Amir Ashraf Ali Khan. He says, 'It is now beyond my power to save the lives of the sahibs, and I will not deceive them, knowing that a warrior's death among the ruins of their fortress will please them better than to fall into the hands of my thrice-accursed nephew, who has stolen the hearts of my soldiers from me. But this I can do. The houses next to the canal on this side are held by my own body-guard, faithful men who have sworn great oaths to me, and I have there six swift camels hidden. Let the Memsahibs be intrusted to me, especially those of the household of my beloved friend Nāth Sahib, and I will send them at once to Nalapur, where they shall be in sanctuary in my own palace, and I will swear—I who kept my covenant with the Sarkar until the Sarkar broke it—that death shall befall me before any danger touches them.'"

"Why is this message sent to-night?" asked Colonel Graham.

"Because Bahram Khan is preparing a great destruction, sahib, and the heart of Ashraf Ali Khan bleeds to think that the houses of his friends Sinjā Kilin and Nāth Sahib should both be blotted out in one day."

"Carry my thanks and those of the Commissioner Sahib to Ashraf Ali Khan, but tell him that the Memsahibs will remain with us. Their presence would only place him in greater danger, and he would not be able to protect them. But we can. They will not fall into the hands of Bahram Khan."

"It is well, sahib." The faint blotch which represented the messenger melted into the surrounding darkness, and Colonel Graham turned to his companion.

"It will be your business to see after that, if the enemy break in. Haycraft comes with me. We must leave Flora in your charge. Don't let her, any more than Miss North, fall into their hands."

"I promise," said Mr. Burgrave, and their hands met in the darkness.

"Thanks! I think we have settled everything now. We don't start for an hour yet, and if you like to explain things to Miss North——"

"I should prefer to say nothing unless the necessity arises."

"I never thought of your going into details, but she must know something, surely? Flora will learn the state of affairs from Haycraft, Mrs. North will pick it up from the Hardys and her ayah, and Miss North will probably expect——But please yourself, of course."

"I will go and talk to her for a little while. I have scarcely seen her all day."

Mr. Burgrave's tone was constrained. It appeared to him almost impossible to meet Mabel at this crisis, and abstain from any allusion to the terrible duty which had just been laid upon him. He was not an imaginative man, and no forecast of the scene burned itself into his brain, as would have been the case with some, but the oppression of anticipation was heavy upon him. For him the dull horror in his mind overshadowed everything, and it was with a shock that he found Mabel in one of her most vivacious and aggressive moods. She was walking up and down the verandah outside her room as if for a wager, turning at each end of the course with a swish of draperies which sounded like an angry breeze, and she hailed his arrival with something like enthusiasm, simply because he was some one to talk to.

"Flora is crying on Fred's—I mean Mr. Haycraft's—shoulder somewhere," she said, "and Mrs. Hardy and Georgia are having a prayer-meeting with the native Christians. They wanted me to come too, but I don't feel as if I could be quiet—and I shouldn't understand, either. What is going to happen, really?"

"The Colonel proposes to make a *sortiè* and capture the enemy's guns. There is, I trust, every prospect of his succeeding."

Mabel stamped her foot. "Why can't you tell me the truth, instead of trying to sugar things over?" she demanded. "It would be much more interesting."

"You must allow me to decide what it is suitable you should hear," said Mr. Burgrave, his mind still so full of that final duty of his that he spoke with a serene indifference which Mabel found most galling.

"I don't allow you to do anything of the sort. I wish you wouldn't treat me as if I was a baby. It's like telling me yesterday that all the fresh milk in the place was to be reserved for us women and the wounded, as if I wanted to be pilloried as a lazy, selfish creature, doing nothing and demanding luxuries!"

"My dear little girl, I am sure there isn't a man in the garrison who would consent to your missing any comfort that the place can furnish."

"That's just it. I want to feel the pinch—to share the hardships. But of course you don't understand—you never do." She stopped and looked at him. "I don't know how it is, Eustace, but you seem somehow to stir up everything that is bad in my nature. I could die happy if I had once shocked you thoroughly."

He recoiled from her involuntarily. "Do you think it is a time to joke about death when it may be close upon you?" he asked, with some severity.

"That sounds as if you were a little shocked," said Mabel meditatively. "But you know, Eustace, whenever you tell me to do anything—I mean when you express a wish that I should do anything—I feel immediately the strongest possible impulse to do exactly the opposite."

"But the impulse has never yet been translated into action?" he asked, with the indulgent smile which was reserved for Mabel when she talked extravagantly.

"I'm ashamed to say it hasn't."

"Then I am quite satisfied. I can scarcely aspire to regulate your thoughts at present, can I? But so long as you respect my wishes——"

"Oh, what a lot of trouble it would save if we were all comfortably killed to-night!" cried Mabel, with a sudden change of mood. Mr. Burgrave was shocked, and showed it. "I'm in earnest, Eustace."

"My dear child, you can hardly expect me to believe that you would welcome the horrors which the storming of this place would entail?"

"Oh, no; of course not. You are so horribly literal. Can't you see that my nerves are all on edge? I wish you understood things. If you won't talk about what's going to be done to-night, do go away, and don't stay here and be mysterious."

"Dear child, do you think I shall judge you hardly for this feminine weakness? You need not be afraid of hurting or shocking me. Say anything you like; I shall put it down to the true cause. If your varying moods have taught me nothing else, at least I have learnt since our engagement to take your words at their proper valuation."

"If you pile many more loads of obligation upon me, I shall expire!" said Mabel sharply, only to receive a kind smile in return. Anything more that she might have said, in the amiable design of shocking him beyond forgiveness, was prevented by the appearance of Mrs. Hardy.

"Is it true that you are going to arm all the civilians in the place, Mr. Burgrave?" she demanded of the Commissioner.

"It is thought well—merely as a precautionary measure."

"Then I do beg and beseech you to give Mr. Hardy a rifle that won't go off, or we shall all be shot."

"We will get the Padri to go round and hand out fresh cartridges," said Mr. Burgrave seriously, but Mabel burst into a peal of hysterical laughter, which was effectual in putting a stop to all further conversation, and he returned to the outer courtyard, where the force composing the forlorn hope was mustering in readiness for the start. Fitz and Winlock and their small party had left already, officers and men alike wearing the native grass sandals instead of boots, as they had been accustomed to do in their hunting expeditions, and it was known that they had scrambled along the wall and round the base of the south-western tower in safety. The ferry had by this time been duly constructed by Runcorn and his assistants, one of whom had undertaken the very unpleasant duty of swimming across the ice-cold canal to pass the first wire rope round one of the posts which registered the height of the water on the opposite bank. Ball ammunition in extra quantities was served out to all, for although Colonel Graham hoped to confine himself entirely to cold steel, for the sake of quietness, he meant to be able to reply to the enemy's fire, should their attention unfortunately be aroused. The men were marched down in parties to the water-gate, and ferried over as quickly as the confined space would allow, after which the raft was drawn back to the gateway, and the wire disconnected. It had been decided that this was necessary, lest the enemy should take advantage of the ferry to cross the canal while the attention of the garrison was occupied by an attack in front. If Colonel Graham and his force returned victorious, it would be easy to carry the wire across again by throwing a rope to them from the rampart, while if they were compelled to retreat, the raft was so small that to use it under fire would entail a useless sacrifice of life, and the fugitives would do better to swim.

Then began a weary waiting-time for those in the fort. The night was almost moonless, so that it was impossible to distinguish any movement, whether on the part of friend or of foe. At last a rocket, rising from the cliff which overhung the town on the north-west, and which Fitz and Winlock had indicated as their goal, showed that they, at least, had so far been successful. The rocket sent up from the fort in reply was answered by another from the cliff, and this was immediately followed by the distant sound of brisk firing, which seemed to cause considerable perturbation in the parts of the town occupied by the enemy. Lights moved about hurriedly from place to place, horns were blown, and there was a confused noise of angry shouting. The garrison did their best, by opening fire from the wall and towers, to increase the effect of the surprise, aiming, necessarily, somewhat at random, for the moving lights did not afford very satisfactory targets. In reply, a dropping fire broke out, which was maintained for some time with but little spirit, and slackened gradually. Scarcely had Mr. Burgrave given the order to cease fire, however, when a heavy fusillade was heard on the west of the fort, though not from the hill. The sound appeared to come from the point at which the bridge, now

ruined, had crossed the canal, a point which the enemy had not hitherto been known to occupy, and which Colonel Graham had not intended to approach. His force should have been far to the left of it by this time, and already mounting the hill. The most probable explanation seemed to be that they had missed their way in the darkness, and following the canal too far, had fallen into an ambuscade posted at the ruins of the bridge to guard against any attempt to cross for the purpose of capturing the guns. The Commissioner and his garrison waited and listened in the deepest anxiety, straining their eyes to try and perceive, from the flashes of the rifles, which way the fight was tending. But the firing ceased suddenly, and about the same time that on the farther side of the enemy's position ceased also. There was nothing to do but wait.

Suddenly a piteous wailing arose at the rear of the fort, from the opposite bank of the canal. A native stood there, one of the water-carriers who had accompanied the force, abjectly entreating to be fetched over, since the enemy were at his heels. To employ the ferry at such a moment was not to be thought of, but a rope was thrown from the steps of the water-gate, and the miserable wretch, plunging in, caught it, and was drawn across. He told a terrible tale as he stood dripping and shivering in the passage leading to the gate. Colonel Graham's force had been attacked, shortly after leaving the canal-bank, by overwhelming numbers of the enemy, who had first poured in a withering fire, and then rushed forward to complete the destruction with their knives and tulwars. The *bhisti* himself was the only man who had escaped, and the enemy had pursued him to the very edge of the canal. The sharpest-sighted men in the fort, sent to the rampart to test the truth of this statement, were able to confirm it. There was undoubtedly a large body of the enemy on the other side of the canal. They were lying down behind the high bank, in order to be sheltered from the fire of the garrison.

"To cut off fugitives, I suppose," muttered Mr. Burgrave, half to himself and half to Ressaldar Ghulam Rasul. "That looks as though the massacre were not quite so complete as—— Hark! I thought I heard a sound from the hill. Can our glorious fellows have made a last dash for it after all—some few who escaped?"

The men on the rampart stood like statues to listen, but failed to distinguish anything that might confirm the Commissioner's surmise. The air seemed full of sound—footfalls, a murmur from the town, a stray shot or two from the same direction, and on the west a kind of shuffling noise. The enemy were taking up their positions for the attack. Mr. Burgrave sent orders to the guard at the water-gate to let the air out of the inflated skins which supported the raft, so as to sink it to the level of the water, and this was at once done. When he had posted a sentry in the passage and another on the rampart, he was able to leave that side of the fort to defend itself, since the enemy had no means of crossing to assail it. To occupy the whole

range of wall with the absurdly small force at his disposal was obviously impossible, and he therefore placed ten men in each of the larger towers, from which, with a certain amount of difficulty and risk, a flanking fire could be obtained, and twelve in the two gateway turrets, retaining the Ressaldar and sixteen men as a reserve, ready to make a dash for any point that might be specially threatened. If the garrison should be driven from the walls, those who escaped were to make for the hospital, whither the women and children would be sent, and where the last stand was to take place. Having made his dispositions, the Commissioner went the round of the towers to encourage the men. His own Sikhs he could deal with well enough, but he felt that it was the irony of fate which obliged him to urge the sowars of the Khemistan Horse to be worthy of their first commander, General Keeling, and it seemed as if the same thought had occurred to the men, for they scowled at him resentfully when they heard the mighty name from his lips.

The bad news brought by the fugitive spread through the fort with astonishing rapidity. The native women, whom Georgia had succeeded in soothing into some sort of calmness before the departure of the force, filled the air with their wailings, until Ismail Bakhsh, who was head of the civilian guard detailed for the defence of the hospital, threatened to fire a volley among them if they were not quiet. Flora Graham's ayah was gossiping with a friend among these women when the news arrived, and she rushed with it at once to her mistress's room. Poor Flora had shut herself up alone to pray for the safety of her father and lover, and was following in thought every step of their perilous journey. She had just reached with them the summit of the hill, and rushed upon the guard round the guns, when the ayah burst in with the news that the worst had happened. The suddenness of the disaster was too much for Flora. Her usual self-control deserted her, and she ran wildly across the courtyard to Georgia's room. Georgia was lying down, talking softly in the dark to Mabel, who sat beside her, and both sprang up at Flora's entrance.

"What is it? Have they come back?" they demanded, with one voice.

"No, no, they are killed—all killed! Papa and Fred both—oh, Mrs. North, what can I do?" She dropped sobbing on the floor at Georgia's feet and buried her face in her dress.

"Perhaps it isn't true," said Georgia faintly. She had sunk down again on the bed.

"There's no hope—one man has come back, the only survivor. Both of them at once! and I was praying for them, and I felt so sure—and even while I was praying they were being killed."

"Is the whole force cut off?" asked Georgia, almost in a whisper.

"All but this one man." Flora checked her sobs for a moment.

"Mr. Anstruther too?" cried Mabel sharply.

"All, I tell you! It doesn't signify to you, Mab; you have your

Eustace left, but I have lost everything. Oh, Mrs. North, you know how it feels. Help me to bear it!"

"Flora dear," began Georgia with difficulty. "I—I can't breathe," she gasped, struggling to stand up. "Please ask Mrs. Hardy to come. I feel so faint. She will understand."

Rahah, who had been crouched in the corner as usual, sprang up, and returned in a moment with Mrs. Hardy, who fell upon both girls immediately, and drove them out with bitter reproaches.

"You pair of selfish, thoughtless chatterboxes! I should have thought you had more sense, Flora. Just be off, both of you. You can have my rooms for the rest of the night; I shall stay here. Even if all our poor fellows are killed, was that any reason for killing Mrs. North too?"

"Oh, please don't, Mrs. Hardy! I never thought—Mrs. North is always so kind, and I am so miserable," sobbed Flora.

"You shouldn't be miserable unless you're certain it's absolutely necessary. You wouldn't believe a native if he told you he was dead, so why should you when he says other people are dead?" demanded Mrs. Hardy, with a brilliancy of logic which somehow failed to satisfy. "I haven't a doubt that the *bhisti* took to his heels in a panic at the sound of the first shot, and if he hadn't fortunately been in the rear, the panic might have spread to all the rest. There, go away, do, and don't cry so. We'll hope all will go well."

"Why have you left your post, doctor?" asked Mr. Burgrave, meeting Dr. Tighe crossing the courtyard.

"The hospital will have to look after itself a good deal to-night, but I have left the Padri and my Babu in charge there. "Mrs. North is taken ill."

"Good Heavens! It only needed this to make the horror of the situation complete."

"From our point of view, it may be the best thing that could happen. It will make the men fight like demons. Here, you girl, where are you going?" He had caught the shoulder of a veiled woman who ran up and tried to slip past him into the passage, but she let her *chadar* fall aside, and disclosed herself as Rahah.

"I have been telling the men of the regiment, sahib, and they have all sworn great oaths that so long as one of them has a spark of life left, Sinjāj Kilin's daughter shall not be without a protector in her need, and that the corpses of friends within and foes without shall be piled as high as the ramparts before the enemy shall gain a footing on the wall. I told also those in the hospital"—there was a hint of malice in Rahah's voice—"and every wounded man that can sit up in bed is demanding a gun. They will serve as hospital guard, they say, and set Ismail Bakhsh and his men free to help on the walls."

"Good idea that," said Dr. Tighe, turning to the Commissioner. "You see how the men take it. Well, I shall keep Mrs. North in her

own quarters if I can, but there is a passage through to the hospital courtyard, and we must carry her over if it's necessary. But I don't think it will be now."

Mr. Burgrave nodded, and returned to his station on the western curtain. Why the enemy did not advance to the attack was a mystery. In the opinion of Ghulam Rasul and his most experienced subordinates, they had moved out from their quarters in the town, and were occupying the irrigated land on both sides of the canal in large numbers, sheltered against any volley from the walls by the groves of trees which marked the lines of the watercourses. They could not be seen, nor could it precisely be said that they were heard, but, as the old soldiers in the garrison said, they felt that they were there. The situation was eerie in the extreme, and Mr. Burgrave was unable to find comfort in a phenomenon which made his men cheerful in a moment. It was the Ressaldar who called his attention to it as they stood straining their ears in the attempt to distinguish some definite sound in the murmuring silence, and at once he himself heard clearly the faint tread of a galloping horse far away to the north-east.

"He rides!" breathed Ghulam Rasul in an ecstasy, and "He rides!" cried the sowar nearest him, catching up the words from his lips. "He rides!" went from man to man, until the defenders of the towers looked at one another with glistening eyes, and even the unsympathetic Sikhs, who held themselves loftily aloof from the contemptible local superstitions of their Khemi comrades, repeated, with something of enthusiasm, "He rides!" "He rides; all is well," said Ismail Bakhsh, puffing out his chest with pride, in his temporary guard-room on the Club-house verandah. "Sinjaj Kilin Sahib is watching over his house and over his children. The power of the Sarkar stands firm."

All unconscious of the moral reinforcement which was doubling the strength of the garrison, Mabel and Flora sat disconsolately over the charcoal brazier in Mrs. Hardy's room, listening for the sounds of the attack, which they expected each moment to begin. Mrs. Hardy's vigorous rebuke had nerved them both to put a brave face on matters, and for some time they vied with one another in discovering reasons for refusing credit to the report of the fugitive, and determining that all might yet be well. But as time went on, and there was no sign of the triumphal return of Colonel Graham and his force, their valiant efforts at cheerfulness flagged perceptibly. Mrs. Hardy, hurrying across to say that Georgia was doing pretty well, advised them to lie down and try to sleep, but they scouted the idea with indignation, and still sat looking gloomily into the glowing embers and listening to the wind, which wailed round the crazy old buildings in a peculiarly mournful manner.

"Doesn't it seem absurdly incongruous," said Mabel at last, in a low voice, "that you and I—two *fin de siècle* High School girls, who have taken up all the modern fads just like other people—should be

sitting here, expecting every moment that a band of savages will break in and kill us—with swords? It feels so unnatural—so horribly out of drawing.”

“How can you talk such nonsense?” snapped Flora, upon whose nerves the strain of suspense was telling severely. “I never heard that a High School career protected people against a violent death. Do you think it felt natural to the women in the Mutiny to be killed—or the French Revolution, or any time like that?”

“I don’t know. It really seems as if they must have been more accustomed to horrors in those days. Just imagine, Flora, the little paragraph there will be in the *South Central Magazine*: ‘We regret to record the death of Miss Mabel North, O.S.C., who was murdered in the late rising on the Indian frontier. Miss Flora Graham, a distinguished student of St. Scipio’s College, St. Margarets, N.B., is believed to have perished on the same sad occasion.’ Your school paper will have just the same sort of thing in it, and the two editors will send each other complimentary copies, and acknowledge the courtesy in the next number. It will all be about you and me—and we shall be dead.”

“Of course we shall; you said that before. But I don’t see what good it does to die many times before our deaths.”

“How horrid of you to call me a coward!” said Mabel pensively.

“I don’t call you anything of the sort. I think you must be fearfully brave to look at things in this detached, artistic, kind of way, but what’s the good of it? Death must come when it will come, but naturally, no one could be expected to look forward with pleasure to the mere fact of dying. Unless, of course”—Flora’s blue eyes shone as she turned suddenly from the general to the particular—“my dying would save papa or Fred. Then I should be glad to die.”

“Do you really mean that you wouldn’t mind being killed if somehow it would save either of their lives?”

“Of course I do, just as you would gladly die to save your Eustace.”

“But I wouldn’t!” cried Mabel involuntarily, then tried to minimise the effect of her admission by turning it into a joke. “I think it’s his privilege to do that for me.”

“I wish you wouldn’t say that sort of thing!” said Flora reproachfully. “Happily there’s no one else to hear it, but if I didn’t know you, I should think you were perfectly horrid.”

“No, Flora, really,” cried Mabel, in a burst of honesty. “I can’t say confidently that there is one person in the world I would die for. I feel as if I could die to save Georgia, but I don’t know whether I could do it when the time came. I used to think that people—English people, at any rate—became heroic just as a matter of course when danger happened, but now I begin to believe that it depends a good deal on what they have been like before.”

“You always try to make the worst of yourself.”

“No, I don’t. I’m trying to look at myself as I really am. I

have never in my life done a thing I didn't like if I could help it. What sort of preparation is that for being heroic? Flora," with a sudden change of subject, "suppose the enemy had stormed the fort before this evening, would you have asked your father or Fred to kill you?"

"No," was the unexpected reply. "It would have been so awfully hard for them. I keep a revolver in this pocket of my coat. You just put it to your eye—and it's done."

"Oh, I wish I was like you! I know I should be wondering and worrying whether it was right, and all that sort of thing, until it was too late to do it."

"I don't care whether it would be right or not," said Flora doggedly. "I should do it. 'Do you think I would make things worse for papa and Fred?'"

"I suppose Eustace would do it for me," drearily. "He would if he thought it was the proper thing. He always does the proper thing."

"I wish you wouldn't talk in that horrid voice. It makes me feel creepy. And I don't think it's fair to say that sort of thing about the Commissioner. He's perfectly devoted to you, and you know it would break his heart to have to do—what we were talking about. I don't believe you're half as fond of him as he is of you."

"Have you found that out now for the first time?"

"Then it's a shame!" cried Flora. "Why do you let him think you care for him? He worships you, and you pretend——"

"I don't pretend. He took it into his head that I cared for him, and wouldn't let me say I didn't. And he doesn't worship me. He thinks that I shall make a nice adoring sort of worshipper for him when he has got me well in hand."

"Well, I think you ought to be ashamed of yourself!" said Flora crushingly.

"You needn't be horrid. I'm sure I have quite enough to bear as it is. What with thinking every morning when I wake that I shall have to be pleasant to him whenever he chooses to come and talk to me all day, when I should like to be at the other end of the world——"

"What do you mean to do when you are married?"

Mabel shivered. "I don't know," she said. "I rather hope we shall be killed instead."

"You can't expect to get out of difficulties in that way. If you want to be killed, you are quite sure not to be. And to go on living a lie——"

"Don't!" entreated Mabel. "Whichever way you look at it, it's dreadful. I don't know what to do. What's that? I'm sure I heard a step."

It must have been Mr. Burggrave's evil genius which prompted him to present himself at this particular time. The enemy had made no movement, and the Commissioner thought he might safely leave the

wall for a moment, in order to obtain a sight of Mabel, and inquire after Georgia. He entered the room with a creditable assumption of cheerfulness, which the girls did not even observe.

"How are we getting on?" asked Mabel hastily.

"Oh, well, we must hope for the best," was the unsatisfying answer. In his own mind, Mr. Burgrave had no doubt that the enemy were only waiting for dawn to make their attack, advancing on the fort at the same moment that their guns opened fire from the hill.

"No news yet of our forlorn hope?" asked Flora.

"No news," he answered, then hesitated with his hand on the door, and looked at Mabel. She rose, as if in response to his glance, and went out on the verandah with him.

"Poor little girl!" he said, putting his arm round her. "This waiting-time is very hard upon you, isn't it? God knows I would give you comfort if I could, but I dare not raise false hopes."

Mabel freed herself from his clasp. In the dim light cast by the brazier through the small window, he could see that she was very pale, and that her eyes looked unnaturally large and dark in the whiteness of her face. "I want you to take this back, please," she said, holding out her engagement-ring. "I can't die with a lie upon my soul."

"A lie!" he exclaimed in bewilderment.

"I don't love you. Sometimes I think I almost hate you," she replied, in a low monotonous voice.

His natural impulse was to take her in his arms, and crush this latest attempt at rebellion by sheer weight of mingled authority and affection, as he had done more than once before, but the words died upon his lips as he looked into her face, and he stood irresolute. This was not coquetry, not the wild talk for which he had smiled at her that very evening, but sober earnest.

"Am I to take this as your own unbiassed wish, Mabel?" he asked slowly, seeing his world fall in ruins around him as he spoke.

"Absolutely," she answered.

He took the ring from her hand. "It is the kind of encouragement that is calculated to nerve a man for the fight, isn't it?" he asked. "But perhaps some bullet will be more merciful than you are."

He slipped the ring on his little finger, and taking up his crutch, left her without another word. When he returned to the rampart, it struck him, preoccupied though he was, that the night was not quite so dark as before. Dawn was approaching, and there was a perceptible unrest in the direction of the plane-trees behind which the enemy were posted. As he stood looking round, Ghulam Rasul approached him from the northern curtain.

"There is a large body of the enemy advancing towards the gate, sahib," he said. "They come from the town, and are marching in perfect silence."

"Then they mean to attack us on two sides at once," said the Commissioner. "Tell the men in the turrets to reserve their fire until they are close up, Ressaldar. We can't afford to throw away a shot. Are the reserve all under arms?"

"All ready, sahib. Your honour can now hear the enemy's approach."

They stood waiting and listening. And in that hour of awful expectancy, when armed men were advancing from all sides upon the sorely tried fort, Georgia's boy was born.

(To be continued.)

BRITTANY OF THE PARDONS

BY EDITH WINGATE RINDER

AS there are two Scotlands, so, too, are there two Brittanys. The holiday-maker who spends a fortnight at St. Malo, Dinard, or Dinan, encountering at every turn groups of English and French folk, or, again, the tourist who makes a rapid train journey through the country, pausing a few hours at some of the principal towns, such as these see only the exterior of Brittany. Happily there is another Brittany which yields herself up, slowly, almost reluctantly, only to those who love her, to those who discern in her legends, her half-pagan superstitions, her strange customs, a depth of significance and of beauty, not to be realised in an hour, in a week, even in a year; to whom her expanses of barren country, shrouded for weeks at a time in thick mist, suggest not vacuity, but a veiled romance—a romance that stretches back to, and even antedates, those upstanding stones of Carnac, through whose avenues were wont to pass the white-robed priests of a forgotten faith; to whom St. Yves is not so much the God-fearing attorney of Tréger, as Saint Ervoan, the only saint of Breton birth, ever eager to aid the many who love and honour him along the coast-line and in the inland hamlets of his country of Landreger. It is fortunate, perhaps, that the passing traveller should not realise this second, this profounder Brittany. If he did, so much has it in common with the past, so little with the dominant spirit of our own day, that mayhap it would hide itself still more heedfully from the view, even of the stranger who comes full of sympathy to learn.

On the inland confines of Brittany, and even far into the country, the Gallic, not the Celtic, spirit is dominant. One must not be content merely to disembark at St. Malo, to look on the cathedral at Dol, to visit the once famous seat of learning at Rennes, or even to imagine that at Lamballe, with its beautiful thirteenth-century church calmly overlooking the plains, or at busy St. Brieuc, there still lingers the spirit of ancient Armorica. Not until one goes farther west, to Guin-gamp, and Plouaret, and Lannion, to peaceful Tréger or any of the thousand little groups of farmsteads, each having its name, scattered about the old bishoprics of Landreger, of St. Pol de Léon; or southward again to the wooded country once known as Cornouailles, now as Quimper, and to a host of other places as yet untouched, or almost untouched, by modern customs and latter-day modes of thought; not until then will one hear peasant address peasant in the Breton tongue, nor discover the Brittany of which we are in search. As in the Highlands, so, in the land of Arvor beloved by those born within

its borders, another than the native tongue is taught in the schools; no word of Breton is permitted there—all is French. Yet so far from the heart of the people is this language, that if one address in French a young girl washing clothes at a roadside pool, she will only smile bashfully and remain silent as if unable to reply. The native tongue is the strongest bulwark that guards old-world customs and traditions against the tide of modern ideas. Many of the aged men and women can understand no word of French, much less speak a syllable. If you branch off from the main road into those characteristic by-paths of Brittany which lead nowhere in particular, but intersect the whole country, you may find comparatively young women on whom the marks of incessant field-labour and frequent child-bearing are ineradicably set, who regard Paris as a remote city belonging to another world, and who if any speak to them in a tongue other than the Breton imagine it must be French, the language that the children are taught in the village school some miles away. After midday mass on Sunday the priest will address his flock in familiar Breton; when the men and women of the country-side gather together in the fields, sickle in hand, to mow the corn, or in the farmyards with flails to divide straw from grain; again, in the long winter evenings, when groups of peasants sit round the great open gorse fires to sing *soniou* (love songs) or *gwerzioù* (heroic ballads), or to listen to familiar but always welcome tales that for generations have been thus handed down from mouth to mouth, Breton only is heard. Quiet, undemonstrative folk they seem, not even remotely conscious of the political upheavals and social excitements of the great world without. They till the soil, they sow, they reap, they thresh; the pig has its litter of young, the cow its calf, the ewe its lamb; and always and ever, sunshine or storm, wet or fine, they trudge on Sunday, perhaps to a distant church, to hear mass, and to invoke the aid of the special saint who zealously guards their weal. On the northern coast-line there is, however, one strong link with another world. From Paimpol sets out each spring a fleet of boats for the Iceland fisheries. Spring wanes into summer, the cornfields yellow to harvest, even the black wheat takes on a deep red, and yet the women at home scan the horizon without catching sight of one home-coming boat. Not a few, with indomitable hope, are destined to wait through the autumn into the winter, and ever through the passing seasons till they themselves gain rest, to wait for husband, brother, lover, who never returns; for the toll of human life among the Icelandic fishermen of Brittany is heavy.

It is with intent that I have dwelt thus long on the folk of Brittany and attempted to indicate some of the conditions of their lives. So much is necessary if one would understand even remotely what a Pardon means in the land of Arvor. The tourist will tell you that these Pardons are no more than pleasure fairs, uninformed by any deeper significance—mere gatherings where fun becomes boisterous towards night. But it is not my purpose here to so much as touch

upon the grosser aspects of Breton life, whose existence it would be folly to deny. My aim is rather to dwell upon that side of the picture too often lost sight of, but none the less vital. In doing this one is open to the charge of idealisation. Selection involves limitation. Moreover, the ancestral lore, the modes of worship of which I speak, are by many accounted as mere superstitions; but, granting the appositeness of the word, my attempt is to gather from them what makes for beauty.

As well as being a feast day—a day of rejoicing for lad and lass, for old and young—these days of Pardon are eagerly looked forward to, their memory guarded, as times when Saint Ervoan bends still nearer his ever-listening ear, when Saint Anne, Saint Nonn, Saint Ronan, Saint Gwenolé hear afresh and heed the cry of each of their faithful followers, even though that cry be for swift and awful vengeance. A Breton writer has said that instead of coming together merely to enjoy themselves, as is so often stated, the Bretons of Armor, the country of the sea, of Argoat, the wooded land, gather to-day at their Pardons as they did two hundred years ago. The Pardon is a *fête* of the soul rather than of the body. There one laughs little, prays much.

Of all the Pardons, that of Saint Anne d'Auray is the most widely known; from a spectacular point of view at any rate, too, it is among the most attractive. Thither flock peasants from many parts of Morbihan in costumes as varied as they are picturesque; for from Quimper to Vannes, from Pont L'Abbé to Lorient, the women are noted for their coiffes, their flowing sleeves, their bright-coloured aprons, the men for their low-crowned beaver hats with long velvet strings and large buckle, their short black jackets trimmed with rows of buttons, their vests of yellow embroidery, their buckled shoes and their full knee-breeches. It is, however, because the Pardon of Saint Anne d'Auray is well known, because popularity has robbed it of the primitive quality which was its chiefest charm, that I will here speak of another instead.

In no part of Brittany, perhaps, has the simple spirit of old been more zealously guarded than in the country of Tréger. From the fishing hamlets of the coast-line, from the hill villages of distant Menez-Hom, from the Ile Grande, or Trebeurden, or Pleumeur-Bodou, pilgrims, because of their vow, still make their way, barefoot and fasting, with lighted tapers in their hands, to the sanctuary of Saint Ervoan at Minihy. And is not the stone of Saint Samson efficacious to-day, as it was of yore, to cure disease and ill? do not young fisher lads and lasses from far go to the shrine of Saint Guerin, washed at high tide by the sea, and leave a pin in the weather-worn wooden figure of the Saint if they wish to marry within the year? Although the good nuns of the Virgin have bought land at Cozporz and there built a big house for summer visitors, although large hotels have been erected at Trestraou and Trestrignel, the country hereabouts is as yet unspoiled.

From the Calvary above the little village of Tregastel the whole country-side is visible: seaward, the great rocks of Ploumanac'h, weird shapes scattered aimlessly about as if by old-time giants, the sandy bay of Cozporz studded with rocky islets, the flat shores that stretch away to the straits of Morvic; and inland a great bow of spires—like slender fingers pointing heavenward—from Trebeurden to La Clarté, the last named seen across the little village of Golcon, nestling amid its elm trees. In summer-time early risers at Cozporz turn their eyes towards the little hamlet on the hill, and, of a sudden, its old church is aglow with the first rays of the just risen sun. In the evening, too, the sacred building is among the last hereabouts to catch the lingering fires thrown up from the surface of the sea. Notre Dame de La Clarté it is called, and well called, for does not Our Lady of Light give it her first greeting and her last.

Let us imagine an 18th of August as just come. From east and west and south for a dozen miles and more groups of men and women move slowly along the by-ways towards La Clarté. Now and again they exchange a few words in Breton; but for the most part they go forward in silence, with a certain brooding melancholy. Set here and there on the roadway are stone crosses, bearing on one side the figure of the Crucified Christ, on the other the Virgin and Child. In general the rain and winds of two centuries have softened the somewhat crude lines of the primitive figures. As the groups of wayfarers, or those that move along singly, pass these Calvaries they cross themselves, and pause almost imperceptibly as they repeat an *Ave*. There is no haste, for the day is one of rest, and those who live afar have started early. The women wear heavy cashmere shawls of black or soft olive-green which has taken on something of the character of the country and of the wearer. Coiffes, snow-white and of various picturesque shapes, sometimes winged, sometimes beautifully embroidered, make their faces seem all the browner, render still deeper the wrinkles that a life of constant toil has set upon the faces of the old and the middle-aged. The young girls singled out to bear the figure of the Virgin are clad altogether in white, the long veils of gauze lending an added simplicity and purity to their round, comely faces, free as yet from any sign of care or excessive labour. As from far and wide the pilgrims approach La Clarté the irregular procession, spread over the moors or winding up the road that leads from the sea-water mills of Ploumanac'h, is a strange sight. The sun, which since dawn has shone unrelentingly, is now high in a cloudless sky. The murmur of the sea breaking against the rocky coast-line is vaguely audible. But for this and the sound of the many quiet feet moving over the green of the meadows, the moorland, or the road, the silence is hardly broken. Presently vehicles, each with its heavy load of worshippers, will ascend the hill. But as yet the sunlight plays only on the procession of white-coiffed women and girls all in white, and on the men in the sombre black dress of this part of Brittany. The last Calvary that they pass stands

at the bottom of La Clarté hill, in the middle of a great circle of grass. It is round this Calvary that at sunset, the night before, a bonfire in honour of the Virgin was kindled; thither, too, after Vespers, the Blessed Virgin and St. Joseph will be borne.

Several hours pass. Around the church the crowd grows denser and denser. Here a Breton, who fares from Pardon to Pardon, is selling the *gwercs* and *sone* of his native land, chanting snatches of one after another as he sells. There, a woman of Perros-Gueric stirs her pancake-batter over a charcoal fire. Stalls, gay with red and blue scapularies and long-coloured tubes, tufted with tissue-paper plumes, stand side by side, and progress is difficult along the ordinarily unfrequented road, because of the influx of a hundred rickety carts and of a vast number of pedestrians. At the church doors the deformed, the diseased, the sick, for miles around congregate, and utter in the guttural Breton, in return for alms seldom refused, a blessing on the donor. But there is peace within the high-walled God's acre. Under the shadow of the church women sit in groups awaiting the hour of Vespers, well content to remain without, in the sunshine, after they have dipped their finger in the holy water. The church itself, a sixteenth-century building, destitute of ornament save for the rich carving above its unused southern door, is crowded to excess, even although it lacks half-an-hour of service time. Immediately beneath the south window of the side aisle are gathered the girls in white, and the sun falls upon them only. Priests from distant parishes assemble round the high altar, but, instinctively, one singles out the pastor of La Clarté himself, as with winsome smile he welcomes now a young choir lad, now a careworn peasant of his flock. The service is full and rich, for the mother cathedral has lent her band of brass instruments, and as the notes swell over the bowed white-coiffed or bared heads, the final hymn bursts forth from every lip, and the procession begins to form.

First comes a sturdy, heavy-featured peasant, with piercing black eyes, bearing a crucifix; next a group of priests in rich vestments, holding aloft the sacred host, at sight of which every knee is bowed; hereafter the children of the convent schools, each with blue and pink paper emblems, lovingly prepared by them for this day of days, followed by a second crucifix hung with tiny bells. Before the priests have reached the churchyard gate the figure of St. Anne, regarded as hardly less of a mother and succourer by these Breton folk than the Virgin herself, is borne down the aisle on the shoulders of four women in black, whose embroidered caps, with long white streamers, show, apart from the witness of their faces, that they are married. Then comes the gentle, kindly St. Joseph, carried by stalwart men, and afterwards the Blessed Mary herself. The white-clad virgins move slowly and reverently forward, proud of the honour that has fallen upon them, while on either side of this group, dominated by the blue-robed Mother of God, float large white banners with devices in blue

and red. The dread power of the sea is vitally felt along the Breton coast, so that there is a special significance when little lads in white sailor dress, and old wrinkled fishermen pass, carrying the miniature boats which, in general, swing cobweb-bound from the rafters of every sea-board church. How else could there be hope in time of storm and shipwreck? Ere the priests, who walk last, have emerged from the sacred building, the first part of the procession has almost reached the Calvary at the foot of the hill.

Within, as without, despite the crowd, the peasants fall on their knees at sight of the sacred host, the priests blessing them to right and left. A passage is reverently made for the procession, which, with its chanting pilgrims, its banners ablaze in the sun, winds its way downward. And after the last figures have passed, the peasants close in in a solid mass and follow to the Calvary, where, kneeling, prayers and thanksgivings and orisons are offered up. The Pardon has been given, and another hymn signals the return upward towards the church.

This annual Pardon of La Clarté, watched from the knolls overlooking the road by hundreds who are themselves unable to take part in the procession, is to folk hereabouts a sacred event. It is of its significance, of the peace it brings, that those of the peasant folk who do not linger at La Clarté for the late afternoon and evening's amusement, ponder, as they fare homeward across the moors, the meadow paths, and the quiet by-ways. On the morrow they will go back to their life of toil, in the fields, in the farmsteads, or on the sea, but the memory of that day of Pardon is lovingly guarded throughout the black months until Our Lady of Light visits her sacred hill once more.

THE HOUSE OF COBWEBS

BY GEORGE GISSING

IT was five o'clock on a June morning. The dirty-buff blind of the lodging-house bedroom shone like cloth of gold as the sun's unclouded rays poured through it, transforming all they illumined, so that things poor and mean seemed to share in the triumphant glory of new-born day. In the bed lay a young man who had already been awake for an hour. He kept stirring uneasily, but with no intention of trying to sleep again. His eyes followed the slow movement of the sunshine on the wall-paper, and noted, as they never had done before, the details of the flower pattern, which represented no flower where-with botanists are acquainted, yet, in this summer light, turned the thoughts to garden and field and hedgerow. The young man had a troubled mind, and his thoughts ran thus:—

"I must have three months at least, and how am I to live? . . . Fifteen shillings a week—not quite that, if I spread my money out. Can one live on fifteen shillings a week—rent, food, washing? . . . I shall have to leave these lodgings at once. They're not luxurious, but I can't live here under twenty-five, that's clear. . . . Three months to finish my book. It's good; I'm hanged if it isn't! This time I shall find a publisher. All I have to do is to stick at my work and keep my mind easy. . . . Lucky that it's summer; I don't need fires. Any corner would do for me where I can be quiet and see the sun. . . . Wonder whether some cottager in Surrey would house and feed me for fifteen shillings a week? . . . No use lying here. Better get up and see how things look after an hour's walk."

So the young man arose and clad himself, and went out into the shining street. His name was Goldthorpe. His years were not yet three and twenty. Since the age of legal independence he had been living alone in London, solitary and poor, very proud of a whole-hearted devotion to the career of authorship. As soon as he slipped out of the stuffy house, the live air, perfumed with freshness from meadows and hills afar, made his blood pulse joyously. He was at the age of hope, and something within him, which did not represent mere youthful illusion, supported his courage in the face of calculations such as would have damped sober experience. With boyish step, so light and springy that it seemed anxious to run and leap, he took his way through a suburb south of Thames, and pushed on towards the first rising of the Surrey hills. And as he walked resolve strengthened itself in his heart. Somehow or other he would live

independently through the next three months. If the worst came to the worst, he could earn bread as clerk or labourer, but as long as his money lasted he would pursue his purpose, and that alone. He sang to himself in this gallant determination, happy as if some one had left him a fortune.

In an ascending road, quiet and tree-shadowed, where the dwellings on either side were for the most part old and small, though here and there a brand-new edifice on a larger scale showed that the neighbourhood was undergoing change such as in our time destroys the picturesque in all London suburbs, the cheery dreamer chanced to turn his eyes upon a spot of desolation which aroused his curiosity and set his fancy at work. Before him stood three deserted houses, a little row once tenanted by middle-class folk, but now for some time unoccupied and unrepaired. They were of brick, but the fronts had a stucco facing cut into imitation of ashlar, and weathered to the sombrest grey. The windows of the ground floor and of that above, and the fanlights above the doors, were boarded up, a guard against unlicensed intrusion; the top storey had not been thought to stand in need of this protection, and a few panes were broken. On these dead frontages could be traced the marks of climbing plants, which once hung their leaves about each doorway; dry fragments of the old stem still adhered to the stucco. What had been the narrow strip of fore-garden, railed from the pavement, was now a little wilderness of coarse grass, docks, nettles, and degenerate shrubs. The paint on the doors had lost all colour, and much of it was blistered off; the three knockers had disappeared, leaving indications of rough removal, as if—which was probably the case—they had fallen a prey to marauders. Standing full in the brilliant sunshine, this spectacle of abandonment seemed sadder yet less ugly than it would have looked under a gloomy sky. Goldthorpe began to weave stories about its musty squalor. He crossed the road to make a nearer inspection; and as he stood gazing at the dishonoured thresholds, at the stained and cracked boarding of the blind windows, at the rusty paling and the broken gates, there sounded from somewhere near a thin, shaky strain of music, the notes of a concertina played with uncertain hand. The sound seemed to come from within the houses, yet how could that be? Assuredly no one lived under these crazy roofs. The musician was playing "Home, Sweet Home," and as Goldthorpe listened it seemed to him that the sound was not stationary. Indeed, it moved; it became more distant, then again the notes sounded more distinctly, and now as if the player were in the open air. Perhaps he was at the back of the houses?

On either side ran a narrow passage, which parted the spot of desolation from inhabited dwellings. Exploring one of these, Goldthorpe found that there lay in the rear a tract of gardens. Each of the three lifeless houses had its garden of about twenty yards long. The bordering wall along the passage allowed a man of average height to peer over it, and Goldthorpe searched with curious eye the piece of ground

which was nearest to him. Many a year must have gone by since any gardening was done here. Once upon a time the useful and ornamental had both been represented in this modest space; now, flowers and vegetables, such of them as survived in the struggle for existence, mingled together, and all alike were threatened by a wild, rank growth of grasses and weeds, which had obliterated the beds, hidden the paths, and made of the whole garden plot a green jungle. But Goldthorpe gave only a glance at this still life; his interest was engrossed by a human figure, seated on a campstool near the back wall of the house, and holding a concertina, whence, at this moment, in slow, melancholy strain, "Home, Sweet Home" began to wheeze forth. The player was a middle-aged man, dressed like a decent clerk or shopkeeper, his head shaded with an old straw hat rather too large for him, and on his feet—one of which swung as he sat with legs crossed—a pair of still more ancient slippers, also too large. With head aside, and eyes looking upward, he seemed to listen in a mild ecstasy to the notes of his instrument. He had a round face of much simplicity and good-nature, semicircular eyebrows, pursed little mouth with abortive moustache, and short thin beard fringing the chinless lower jaw. Having observed this unimposing person for a minute or two, himself unseen, Goldthorpe surveyed the rear of the building, anxious to discover any sign of its still serving as human habitation; but nothing spoke of tenancy. The windows on this side were not boarded, and only a few panes were broken; but the chief point of contrast with the desolate front was made by a Virginia creeper, which grew luxuriantly up to the eaves, hiding every sign of decay save those dim, dusty apertures which seemed to deny all possibility of life within. And yet, on looking steadily, did he not discern something at one of the windows on the top storey—something like a curtain or a blind? And had not that same window the appearance of having been more recently cleaned than the others? He could not be sure; perhaps he only fancied these things. With neck aching from the strained position in which he had made his survey over the wall, the young man turned away. In the same moment "Home, Sweet Home" came to an end, and, but for the cry of a milkman, the early-morning silence was undisturbed.

Goldthorpe pursued his walk, thinking of what he had seen, and wondering what it all meant. On his way back he made a point of again passing the deserted houses, and again he peered over the wall of the passage. The man was still there, but no longer seated with the concertina; wearing a round felt hat instead of the straw, he stood almost knee-deep in vegetation, and appeared to be examining the various growths about him. Presently he moved forward, and, with head still bent, approached the lower end of the garden, where, in a wall higher than that over which Goldthorpe made his espial, there was a wooden door. This the man opened with a key, and, having passed out, could be heard to turn a lock behind him. A minute more, and

this short, respectable figure came into sight at the end of the passage. Goldthorpe could not resist the opportunity thus offered. Affecting to turn a look of interest towards the nearest roof, he waited until the stranger was about to pass him, then, with civil greeting, ventured upon a question.

"Can you tell me how these houses come to be in this neglected state?"

The stranger smiled; a soft, modest, deferential smile such as became his countenance, and spoke in a corresponding voice, which had a vaguely provincial accent.

"No wonder it surprises you, sir. I should be surprised myself. It comes of quarrels and lawsuits."

"So I supposed. Do you know who the property belongs to?"

"Well, yes, sir. The fact is—it belongs to me."

The avowal was made apologetically, and yet with a certain timid pride. Goldthorpe exhibited all the interest he felt. An idea had suddenly sprung up in his mind; he met the stranger's look, and spoke with the easy good-humour natural to him.

"It seems a great pity that houses should be standing empty like that. Are they quite uninhabitable? Couldn't one camp here during this fine summer weather? To tell you the truth, I'm looking for a room—as cheap a room as I can get. Could you let me one for the next three months?"

The stranger was astonished. He regarded the young man with an uneasy smile.

"You are joking, sir."

"Not a bit of it. Is the thing quite impossible? Are all the rooms in too bad a state?"

"I won't say *that*," replied the other cautiously, still eyeing his interlocutor with surprised glances. "The upper rooms are really not so bad—that is to say from a humble point of view. I—I have been looking at them just now. You really mean, sir——?"

"I'm quite in earnest, I assure you," cried Goldthorpe cheerily. "You see I'm tolerably well dressed still, but I've precious little money, and I want to eke out the little I've got for about three months. I'm writing a book. I think I shall manage to sell it when it's done, but it'll take me about three months yet. I don't care what sort of place I live in, so long as it's quiet. Couldn't we come to terms?"

The listener's visage seemed to grow rounder in progressive astonishment; his eyes declared an emotion akin to awe; his little mouth shaped itself as if about to whistle.

"A book, sir? You are writing a book? You are a literary man?"

"Well, a beginner. I have poverty on my side, you see."

"Why, it's like Dr. Johnson!" cried the other, his face glowing with interest. "It's like Chatterton!—though I'm sure I hope you won't end like him, sir. It's like Goldsmith!—indeed it is!"

"I've got half Oliver's name, at all events," laughed the young man. "Mine is Goldthorpe."

"You don't say so, sir! What a strange coincidence! Mine, sir, is Spicer. I—I don't know whether you'd care to come into my garden? We might talk there——"

In a minute or two they were standing amid the green jungle, which Goldthorpe viewed with delight. He declared it the most picturesque garden he had ever seen.

"Why, there are potatoes growing there. And what are those things? Jerusalem artichokes? And look at that magnificent thistle; I never saw a finer thistle in my life! And poppies—and marigolds—and broad beans—and isn't that lettuce?"

Mr. Spicer was red with gratification.

"I feel that something might be done with the garden, sir," he said. "The fact is, sir, I've only lately come into this property, and I'm sorry to say it'll only be mine for a little more than a year—a year from next midsummer day, sir. There's the explanation of what you see. It's leasehold property, and the lease is just coming to its end. Five years ago, sir, an uncle of mine inherited the property from his brother. The houses were then in a very bad state, and only one of them let, and there had been lawsuits going on for a long time between the leaseholder and the ground-landlord—I can't quite understand these matters, they're not at all in my line, sir; but at all events there were quarrels and lawsuits, and I'm told one of the tenants was somehow mixed up in it. The fact is, my uncle wasn't a very well-to-do man, and perhaps he didn't feel able to repair the houses, especially as the lease was drawing to its end. Would you like to go in and have a look round?"

They entered by the back door, which admitted them to a little wash-house. The window was over-spun with cobwebs, thick, hoary; each corner of the ceiling was cobweb-packed; long, dusty filaments depended along the walls. Notwithstanding, Goldthorpe noticed that the house had a water supply; the sink was wet, the tap above it looked new. This confirmed a suspicion in his mind, but he made no remark. They passed into the kitchen. Here again the work of the spider showed thick on every hand. The window, however, though uncleaned for years, had recently been opened; one knew that by the torn and ragged condition of the webs where the sashes joined. And lo! on the window-sill stood a plate, a cup and saucer, a knife, a fork, a spoon—all of them manifestly new-washed. Goldthorpe affected not to see these objects; he averted his face to hide an involuntary smile.

"I must light a candle," said Mr. Spicer. "The staircase is quite dark."

A candle stood ready, with a box of matches, on the rusty cooking-stove. No fire had burned in the grate for many a long day; of that the visitor assured himself. Save the objects on the window-sill, no

evidence of human occupation was discoverable. Having struck a light, Mr. Spicer advanced. In the front passage, on the stairs, on the landing, every angle and every projection had its drapery of cobwebs. The stuffy, musty air smelt of cobwebs; so, at all events, did Goldthorpe explain to himself a peculiar odour which he seemed never to have smelt. It was the same in the two rooms on the first floor. Through the boarded windows of that in front penetrated a few thin rays from the golden sky; they gleamed upon dust and web, on faded, torn wall-paper and a fireplace in ruins.

"I shouldn't recommend you to take either of *these* rooms," said Mr. Spicer, looking nervously at his companion. "They really can't be called attractive."

"Those at the top are healthier, no doubt," was the young man's reply. "I noticed that some of the window-glass is broken. That must have been good for airing."

Mr. Spicer grew more and more nervous. He opened his little round mouth, very much like a fish gasping, but seemed unable to speak. Silently he led the way to the top storey, still amid cobwebs; the atmosphere was certainly purer up here, and when they entered the first room they found themselves all at once in such a flood of glorious sunshine that Goldthorpe shouted with delight.

"Ah, I could live here! Would it cost much to have panes put in? An old woman with a broom would do the rest." He added in a moment, "But the back windows are not broken, I think?"

"No—I think not—I—no——"

Mr. Spicer gasped and stammered. He stood holding the candle (its light invisible) so that the grease dripped steadily on to his trousers.

"Let's have a look at the other," cried Goldthorpe. "It gets the afternoon sun, no doubt. And one would have a view of the garden."

"Stop, sir!" broke from his companion, who was red and perspiring. "There's something I should like to tell you before you go into that room. I—it—the fact is, sir, that—temporarily—I am occupying it myself."

"Oh, I beg your pardon, Mr. Spicer!"

"Not at all, sir! Don't mention it, sir. I have a reason—it seemed to me—I've merely put in a bed and a table, sir, that's all—a temporary arrangement."

"Yes, yes; I quite understand. What could be more sensible? If the house were mine, I should do the same. What's the good of owning a house, and making no use of it?"

Great was Mr. Spicer's satisfaction.

"See what it is, sir," he exclaimed, "to have to do with a literary man! You are large-minded, sir; you see things from an intellectual point of view. I can't tell you how it gratifies me, sir, to have made your acquaintance. Let us go into the back room."

With nervous boldness he threw the door open. Goldthorpe,

advancing respectfully, saw that Mr. Spicer had not exaggerated the simplicity of his arrangements. In a certain measure the room had been cleaned, but along the angle of walls and ceiling there still clung a good many cobwebs, and the state of the paper was deplorable. A blind hung at the window, but the floor had no carpet. In one corner stood a little camp bed, neatly made for the day; a table and a chair, of the cheapest species, occupied the middle of the floor, and on the hearth was an oil cooking-stove.

"It's wonderful how little one really wants," remarked Mr. Spicer, "at all events in weather such as this. I find that I get along here very well indeed. The only expense I had was for the water supply. And really, sir, when one comes to think of it, the situation is pleasant. If one doesn't mind loneliness—and it happens that I don't. I have my books, sir——"

He opened the door of a cupboard containing several shelves. The first thing Goldthorpe's eye fell upon was the concertina; he saw also sundry articles of clothing, neatly disposed, a little crockery, and, ranged on the two top shelves, some thirty volumes, all of venerable aspect.

"Literature, sir," pursued Mr. Spicer modestly, "has always been my comfort. I haven't had very much time for reading, but my motto, sir, has been *nulla dies sine linea*."

It appeared from his pronunciation that Mr. Spicer was no classical scholar, but he uttered the Latin words with infinite gusto, and timidly watched their effect upon the listener.

"This is delightful," cried Mr. Goldthorpe. "Will you let me have the front room? I could work here splendidly—splendidly! What rent do you ask, Mr. Spicer?"

"Why really, sir, to tell you the truth I don't know what to say. Of course the windows must be seen to. The fact is, sir, if you felt disposed to do that at your own expense, and—and to have the room cleaned, and—and, let us say, to bear half the water-rate whilst you are here, why, really, I hardly feel justified in asking anything more."

It was Goldthorpe's turn to be embarrassed, for, little as he was prepared to pay, he did not like to accept a stranger's generosity. They discussed the matter in detail, with the result that for the arrangement which Mr. Spicer had proposed there was substituted a weekly rent of two shillings, the lease extending over a period of three months. Goldthorpe was to live quite independently, asking nothing in the way of domestic service; moreover, he was requested to introduce no other person to the house, even as casual visitor. These conditions Mr. Spicer set forth, in a commercial hand, on a sheet of notepaper, and the agreement was solemnly signed by both contracting parties.

On the way home to breakfast, Goldthorpe reviewed his position now that he had taken this decisive step. It was plain that he must furnish his room with the articles which Mr. Spicer found indispensable, and

this outlay, be as economical as he might, would tell upon the little capital which was to support him for three months. Indeed, when all had been done, and he found himself, four days later, dwelling on the top storey of the house of cobwebs, a simple computation informed him that his total expenditure, after payment of rent, must not exceed fifteenpence a day. What matter? He was in the highest spirits, full of energy and hope. His landlord had been kind and helpful in all sorts of ways, helping him to clean the room, to remove his property from the old lodgings, to make purchases at the lowest possible rate, to establish himself as comfortably as circumstances permitted. And when, on the first morning of his tenancy, he was awakened by a brilliant sun, the young man had a sensation of comfort and satisfaction quite new in his experience; for he was really at home; the bed he slept on, the table he ate at and wrote upon, were his own possessions; he thought with pity of his lodging-house life, and felt a joyous assurance that here he would do better work than ever before.

In less than a week Mr. Spicer and he were so friendly that they began to eat together, taking it in turns to prepare the meal. Now and then they walked in company, and every evening they sat smoking (very cheap tobacco) in the wild garden. Little by little Mr. Spicer revealed the facts of his history. He had begun life, in a midland town, as a chemist's errand-boy, and by steady perseverance, with a little pecuniary help from relatives, had at length risen to the position of chemist's assistant. For five-and-twenty years he practised such rigid economy that, having no one but himself to provide for, he began to foresee a possibility of passing his old age elsewhere than in the workhouse. Then befell the death of his uncle, which was to have important consequences for him. Mr. Spicer told the story of this exciting moment late one evening, when, kept indoors by rain, the companions sat together upstairs, one on each side of the rusty and empty fireplace.

"All my life, Mr. Goldthorpe, I've thought what a delightful thing it must be to have a house of one's own. I mean, really of one's own; not only a rented house, but one in which you could live and die, feeling that no one had a right to turn you out. Often and often I've dreamt of it, and tried to imagine what the feeling would be like. Not a large, fine house—oh dear, no! I didn't care how small it might be; indeed, the smaller the better for a man of my sort. Well, then, you can imagine how it came upon me when I heard—— But let me tell you first that I hadn't seen my uncle for fifteen years or more. I had always thought him a well-to-do man, and I knew he wasn't married, but the truth is, it never came into my head that he might leave me something. Picture me, Mr. Goldthorpe—you have imagination, sir—standing behind the counter and thinking about nothing but business, when in comes a young gentleman—I see him now—and asks for Mr. Spicer. 'Spicer is my name, sir,' I said. 'And you are the nephew,' were his next words, 'of the late Mr. Isaac Spicer, of

Clapham, London?' That shook me, sir, I assure you it did, but I hope I behaved decently. The young gentleman went on to tell me that my uncle had left no will, and that I was believed to be his next-of-kin, and that if so, I inherited all his property, the principal part of which was three houses in London. Now try and think, Mr. Goldthorpe, what sort of state I was in after hearing that. You're an intellectual man, and you can enter into another's mind. Three houses! Well, sir, you know what houses those were. I came up to London at once (it was last autumn), and I saw my uncle's lawyer, and he told me all about the property, and I saw it for myself. Ah, Mr. Goldthorpe! If ever a man suffered a bitter disappointment, sir!"

He ended on a little laugh, as if excusing himself for making so much of his story, and sat for a moment with head bowed.

"Fate played you a nasty trick there," said Goldthorpe. "A knavish trick."

"One felt almost justified in using strong language, sir—though I always avoid it on principle. However, I must tell you that the houses weren't all. Luckily there was a little money as well, and, putting it with my own savings, sir, I found it would yield me an income. When I say an income, I mean, of course, for a man in my position. Even when I have to go into lodgings, when my houses become the property of the ground-landlord—to my mind, Mr. Goldthorpe, a very great injustice, but I don't set myself up against the law of the land—I shall just be able to live. And that's no small blessing, sir, as I think you'll agree."

"Rather! It's the height of human felicity, Mr. Spicer. I envy you vastly."

"Well, sir, I'm rather disposed to look at it in that light myself. My nature is not discontented, Mr. Goldthorpe. But, sir, if you could have seen me when the lawyer began to explain about the houses! I was absolutely ignorant of the leasehold system; at first I really couldn't understand. The lawyer thought me a fool, I fear, sir. And when I came down here and saw the houses themselves! I'm afraid, Mr. Goldthorpe, I'm really afraid, sir, I was weak enough to shed a tear."

They were sitting by the light of a very small lamp, which did not tend to cheerfulness.

"Come," cried Goldthorpe, "after all, the houses are yours for a twelvemonth. Why shouldn't we both live on here all the time? It'll be a little breezy in winter, but we could have the fireplaces knocked into shape, and keep up good fires. When I've sold my book I'll pay a higher rent, Mr. Spicer. I like the old house, upon my word I do! Come, let us have a tune before we go to bed."

Smiling and happy, Mr. Spicer fetched from the cupboard his concertina, and after the usual apology for what he called his "imperfect mastery of the instrument," sat down to play "Home, Sweet Home." He had played it for years, and evidently would never improve in his

execution. After "Home, Sweet Home" came "The Bluebells of Scotland," after that "Annie Laurie"; and Mr. Spicer's repertory was at an end. He talked of learning new pieces, but there was not the slightest hope of this achievement.

Mr. Spicer's mental development had ceased more than twenty years ago, when, after extreme efforts, he had attained the qualification of chemist's assistant. Since then the world had stood still with him. Though a true lover of books, he knew nothing of any that had been published during his own lifetime. His father, though very poor, had possessed a little collection of volumes, the very same which now stood in Mr. Spicer's cupboard. The authors represented in this library were either English classics or obscure writers of the early part of the nineteenth century. Knowing these books very thoroughly, Mr. Spicer sometimes indulged in a quotation which would have puzzled even the erudite. His favourite poet was Cowper, whose moral sentiments greatly soothed him. He spoke of Byron like some contemporary who, whilst admitting his lordship's genius, felt an abhorrence of his life. He judged literature solely from the moral point of view, and was incapable of understanding any other. Of fiction he had read very little indeed, for it was not regarded with favour by his parents. Scott was hardly more than a name to him, and though he avowed acquaintance with one or two works of Dickens, he spoke of them with an uneasy smile, as if in some doubt as to their tendency. With these intellectual characteristics, Mr. Spicer naturally found it difficult to appreciate the attitude of his literary friend, a young man whose brain thrilled in response to modern ideas, and who regarded himself as the destined leader of a new school of fiction. Not indiscreet, Goldthorpe soon became aware that he had better talk as little as possible of the work which absorbed his energies. He had enough liberality and sense of humour to understand and enjoy his landlord's conversation, and the simple goodness of the man inspired him with no little respect. Thus they got along together remarkably well. Mr. Spicer never ceased to feel himself honoured by the presence under his roof of one who—as he was wont to say—wielded the pen. The tradition of Grub Street was for him a living fact. He thought of all authors as struggling with poverty, and continued to cite eighteenth-century examples by way of encouraging Goldthorpe and animating his zeal. Whilst the young man was at work Mr. Spicer moved about the house with soundless footsteps. When invited into his tenant's room he had a reverential demeanour, and the sight of manuscript on the bare deal table caused him to subdue his voice.

The weeks went by, and Goldthorpe's novel steadily progressed. In London he had only two or three acquaintances, and from them he held aloof, lest necessity or temptation should lead to his spending money which he could not spare. The few letters which he received were addressed to a post-office—impossible to shock the nerves of a postman by requesting him to deliver correspondence at this dead

house, of which the front door had not been opened for years. The weather was perfect; a great deal of sunshine, but as yet no oppressive heat, even in the chambers under the roof. Towards the end of June Mr. Spicer began to amuse himself with a little gardening. He had discovered in the coal-hole an ancient fork, with one prong broken and the others rusting away. This implement served him in his slow, meditative attack on that part of the jungle which seemed to offer least resistance. He would work for quarter of an hour, then, resting on his fork, contemplate the tangled mass of vegetation which he had succeeded in tearing up.

"Our aim should be," he said gravely, when Goldthorpe came to observe his progress, "to clear the soil round about those vegetables and flowers which seem worth preserving. These broad-beans, for instance—they seem to be a very fine sort. And the Jerusalem artichokes. I've been making inquiry about the artichokes, and I am told they are not ready to eat till the autumn. The first frost is said to improve them. They're fine plants—very fine plants."

Already the garden had supplied them with occasional food, but they had to confess that, for the most part, these wild vegetables lacked savour. The artichokes, now shooting up into a leafy grove, were the great hope of the future. It would be deplorable to quit the house before this tuber came to maturity.

"The worst of it is," remarked Mr. Spicer one day, when he was perspiring freely, "that I can't help thinking of how different it would be if this garden was really my own. The fact is, Mr. Goldthorpe, I can't put much heart into the work; no, I can't. The more I reflect, the more indignant I become. Really now, Mr. Goldthorpe, speaking as an intellectual man, as a man of imagination, could anything be more cruelly unjust than this leasehold system? I assure you, it keeps me awake at night; it really does."

The tenor of his conversation proved that Mr. Spicer had no intention of leaving the house until he was legally obliged to do so. More than once he had an interview with his late uncle's solicitor, and each time he came back with melancholy brow. All the details of the story were now familiar to him; he knew all about the lawsuits which had ruined the property. Whenever he spoke of the ground-landlord, known to him only by name, it was with a severity such as he never permitted himself on any other subject. The ground-landlord was, to his mind, an embodiment of social injustice.

"Never in my life, Mr. Goldthorpe, did I grudge any payment of money as I grudge the ground-rent of these houses. I feel it as robbery, sir, as sheer robbery, though the sum is so small. When, in my ignorance, the matter was first explained to me, I wondered why my uncle had continued to pay this rent, the houses being of no profit to him. But now I understand, Mr. Goldthorpe; the sense of possession is very sweet. Property's property, even when it's leasehold and in ruins. I grudge the ground-rent bitterly, but I feel, sir,

that I couldn't bear to lose my houses until the fatal moment when lose them I must."

In August the thermometer began to mark high degrees. Goldthorpe found it necessary to dispense with coat and waistcoat when he was working, and at times a treacherous languor whispered to him of the delights of idleness. After one particularly hot day, he and his landlord smoked together in the dusking garden, both unusually silent. Mr. Spicer's eye dwelt upon the great heap of weeds which was resulting from his labour; an odour somewhat too poignant arose from it upon the close air. Goldthorpe, who had been rather headachey all day, was trying to think into perfect clearness the last chapters of his book, and found it difficult.

"You know," he said all at once, with an impatient movement, "we ought to be at the seaside."

"The seaside?" echoed his companion, in surprise. "Ah, it's a long time since I saw the sea, Mr. Goldthorpe. Why, it must be—yes, it is at least twenty years."

"Really? I've been there every year of my life till this. One gets into the way of thinking of luxuries as necessities. I tell you what it is. If I sell my book as soon as it's done, we'll have a few days somewhere on the South Coast together."

Mr. Spicer betrayed uneasiness.

"I should like it much," he murmured, "but I fear, Mr. Goldthorpe, I greatly fear I can't afford it."

"Oh, but I mean that you shall go with me as my guest! But for you, Mr. Spicer, I might never have got my book written at all."

"I feel it an honour, sir, I assure you, to have a literary man in my house," was the genial reply. "And you think the *work* will soon be finished, sir?"

Mr. Spicer always spoke of his tenant's novel as "the work"—which on his lips had a very large and respectful sound.

"About a fortnight more," answered Goldthorpe with grave intensity.

The heat continued. As he lay awake before getting up, eager to finish his book, yet dreading the torrid temperature of his room, which made the brain sluggish and the hand slow, Goldthorpe saw how two or three energetic spiders had begun to spin webs once more at the corners of the ceiling; now and then he heard the long buzzing of a fly entangled in one of these webs. The same thing was happening in Mr. Spicer's chamber. It did not seem worth while to brush the new webs away.

"When you come to think of it, sir," said the landlord, "it's the spiders who are the real owners of these houses. When I go away, they'll be pulled down; they're not fit for human habitation. Only the spiders are really at home here, and the fact is, sir, I don't feel I have the right to disturb them. As a man of imagination, Mr. Goldthorpe, you'll understand my thoughts!"

Only with a great effort was the novel finished. Goldthorpe had lost his appetite (not, perhaps, altogether a disadvantage), and he could not sleep; a slight fever seemed to be constantly upon him. But his work was a question of life and death, and he brought it to an end only a few days after the term he had set himself. The complete manuscript was exhibited to Mr. Spicer, who expressed his profound sense of the privilege. Then, without delay, Goldthorpe took it to the publishing house in which he had most hope.

The young author could now do nothing but wait, and, under the circumstances, waiting meant torture. His money was all but exhausted; if he could not speedily sell the book, his position would be that of a mere pauper. Supported thus long by the artist's enthusiasm, he fell into despondency, saw the dark side of things. To be sure, his mother (a widow in narrow circumstances) had written pressing him to take a holiday "at home," but he dreaded the thought of going penniless to his mother's house, and there, perchance, receiving bad news about his book. An ugly feature of the situation was that he continued to feel anything but well; indeed, he felt sure that he was getting worse. At night he suffered severely; sleep had almost forsaken him. Hour after hour he lay listening to mysterious noises, strange crackings and creakings through the desolate house; sometimes he imagined the sound of footsteps in the bare rooms below; even hushed voices, from he knew not where, chilled his blood at midnight. Since crumbs had begun to lie about, mice were common; they scampered as if in revelry above the ceiling, and under the floor, and within the walls. Goldthorpe began to dislike this strange abode. He felt that under any circumstances it would be impossible for him to dwell here much longer.

When his last coin was spent, and he had no choice but to pawn or sell something for a few days' subsistence, the manuscript came back upon his hands. It had been judged—declined.

That morning he felt seriously unwell. After making known the catastrophe to Mr. Spicer—who was stricken voiceless—he stood silent for a minute or two, then said with quiet resolve:

"It's all up. I've no money, and I feel as if I were going to have an illness. I must say good-bye to you, old friend."

"Mr. Goldthorpe!" exclaimed the other solemnly. "I entreat you, sir, to do nothing rash! Take heart, sir! Think of Samuel Johnson, think of Goldsmith——"

"The extent of my rashness, Mr. Spicer, will be to raise enough money on my watch to get down into Derbyshire. I must go home. If I don't, you'll have the pleasant job of taking me to a hospital."

Mr. Spicer insisted on lending him the small sum he needed. An hour or two later they were at St. Pancras Station, and before sunset Goldthorpe had found harbourage under his mother's roof. There he lay ill for more than a month, and convalescent for as long again. His doctor declared that he must have been living in some very unhealthy

place, but the young man preferred to explain his illness by overwork. It seemed to him sheer ingratitude to throw blame on Mr. Spicer's house, where he had been so contented and worked so well until the hot days of latter August. Mr. Spicer himself wrote kind and odd little letters, giving an account of the garden, and earnestly hoping that his literary friend would be back in London to taste the Jerusalem artichokes. But Christmas came and went, and Goldthorpe was still at his mother's house.

Meanwhile the manuscript had gone from publisher to publisher, and at length, on a day in January—date ever memorable in Goldthorpe's life—there arrived a short letter in which a certain firm drily intimated their approval of the story offered them, and their willingness to purchase the copyright for a sum of fifty pounds. The next morning the triumphant author travelled to London. For two or three days a violent gale had been blowing, with much damage throughout the country; on his journey Goldthorpe saw many great trees lying prostrate, beaten, as though scornfully, by the cold rain which now descended in torrents. Arrived in town, he went to the house where he had lodged in the time of comparative prosperity, and there was lucky enough to find his old rooms vacant. On the morrow he called upon the gracious publishers, and after that, under a sky now become more gentle, he took his way towards the abode of Mr. Spicer.

Eager to communicate the joyous news, glad in the prospect of seeing his simple-hearted friend, he went at a great pace up the ascending road. There were the three houses, looking drearier than ever in a faint gleam of winter sunshine. There were his old windows. But—what had happened to the roof? He stood in astonishment and apprehension, for, just above the room where he had dwelt, the roof was an utter wreck, showing a great hole, as if something had fallen upon it with crushing weight. As indeed was the case; evidently the chimney-stack had come down, and doubtless in the recent gale. Seized with anxiety on Mr. Spicer's account, he ran round to the back of the garden and tried the door; but it was locked as usual. He strained to peer over the garden wall, but could discover nothing that threw light on his friend's fate; he noticed, however, a great grove of dead, brown artichoke stems, seven or eight feet high. Looking up at the back windows, he shouted Mr. Spicer's name; it was useless. Then, in serious alarm, he betook himself to the house on the other side of the passage, knocked at the door, and asked of the woman who presented herself, whether anything was known of a gentleman who dwelt where the chimney-stack had just fallen. News was at once forthcoming; the event had obviously caused no small local excitement. It was two days since the falling of the chimney, which happened towards evening, when the gale blew its hardest. Mr. Spicer was at that moment sitting before the fire, and only by a miracle had he escaped destruction, for an immense

weight of material came down through the rotten roof, and even broke a good deal of the flooring. Had the occupant been anywhere but close by the fireplace, he must have been crushed to a mummy; as it was, only a few bricks struck him, inflicting severe bruises on back and arms. But the shock had been serious. When his shouts from the window at length attracted attention and brought help, the poor man had to be carried downstairs, and in a thoroughly helpless state was removed to the nearest hospital.

"Which room was he in?" inquired Goldthorpe. "Back or front?"

"In the front room. The back wasn't touched."

Musing on Mr. Spicer's bad luck—for it seemed as if he had changed from the back to the front room just in order that the chimney might fall on him—Goldthorpe hastened away to the hospital. He could not be admitted to-day, but heard that his friend was doing very well; on the morrow he would be allowed to see him.

So at the visitors' hour Goldthorpe returned. Entering the long accident ward, he searched anxiously for the familiar face, and caught sight of it just as it began to beam recognition. Mr. Spicer was sitting up in bed; he looked pale and meagre, but not seriously ill; his voice quivered with delight as he greeted the young man.

"I heard of your inquiring for me yesterday, Mr. Goldthorpe, and I've hardly been able to live for impatience to see you. How are you, sir? How are you? And what news about the *work*, sir?"

"We'll talk about that presently, Mr. Spicer. Tell me all about your accident. How came you to be in the front room?"

"Ah, sir," replied the patient, with a little shake of the head, "that indeed was singular. Only a few days before, I had made a removal from my room into yours. I call it yours, sir, for I always thought of it as yours; but thank Heaven you were not there. Only a few days before. I took that step, Mr. Goldthorpe, for two reasons; first because water was coming through the roof at the back in rather unpleasant quantities, and secondly because I hoped to get a little morning sun in the front. The fact is, sir, my room had been just a little depressing. Ah, Mr. Goldthorpe, if you knew how I have missed you, sir! But the *work*—what news of the *work*?"

Smiling as though carelessly, the author made known his good fortune. For a quarter of an hour Mr. Spicer could talk of nothing else.

"This has completed my cure!" he kept repeating. "The work was composed under my roof, my own roof, sir! Did I not tell you to take heart?"

"And where are you going to live?" asked Goldthorpe presently. "You can't go back to the old house."

"Alas! no, sir. All my life I have dreamt of the joy of owning a house. You know how the dream was realised, Mr. Goldthorpe, and

you see what has come of it at last. Probably it is a chastisement for overweening desires, sir. I should have remembered my position, and kept my wishes within bounds. But, Mr. Goldthorpe, I shall continue to cultivate the garden, sir. I shall put in spring lettuces, and radishes, and mustard and cress. The property is mine till midsummer day. You shall eat a lettuce of my growing, Mr. Goldthorpe; I am bent on that. And how I grieve that you were not with me at the time of the artichokes—just at the moment when they were touched by the first frost!”

“Ah! They were really good, Mr. Spicer?”

“Sir, they seemed good to *me*, very good. Just at the moment of the first frost!”

GRANT ALLEN

BY ANDREW LANG

IN Mr. Clodd's brief biography of Mr. Grant Allen he cites some phrases of Mr. Purcell to the effect that on no condition would Mr. Purcell have abandoned his hearty hostility to all the ideas of his friend. I, too, cannot easily call to mind a notion of Mr. Allen's from which I did not differ—and he had many notions. He, again, once expressed his amazement that a citizen of outwardly decorous life could hold some idea which I had put forth as my own. What it was I do not remember, but probably "my muse was the patriotic." Patriotism was a red rag to him at any time; and I am convinced that he would have been a Pro-Boxer.

In reading Mr. Clodd's book, which is a model in its kind, and does not add a new terror to death, one is selfishly interested in observing the entire contrast of ideas which may exist between two men of the same generation, the same education, and to some degree the same studies. Whatever Mr. Grant Allen thought, I always thought "the plat contrary," as the Scots said in Queen Mary's time. Why? Our breed was not so far apart; one college sheltered us both; in prose and rhyme we had many kindred tastes. But we always saw from opposite sides the shield of the fable, and broke lances under the most opposite colours.

Mr. Allen, by parentage, was the son of a race of Irish Allens from county Clare, originally Norman, I fancy, of the great Fitz Alan stock. Of course they may have been Celts who took a Norman patronymic long ago, but they were Protestants, which makes against that theory. An Irishman is not necessarily a Celt, as some so vainly talk; the Allens may have been Cromwellians. On the spindle side Mr. Grant Allen came of a sept of Grants of Blairfindie, Glen Moriston Grants, I daresay, who were out for Prince Charles when the chief of the clan merely shuffled. The Grants, I admit, are likely to have had some Celtic blood in their veins, and these particular Grants, unlike the mass of the name, were Jacobites, and went, or were sent to America. One of them married a French lady, and that is all we know about "heredity" in this case. Mr. Clodd thinks that his friend was "well-nigh as pure-blooded a Celt" as possible. I do not see it; I do not know that the French ancestress or the Irish ancestors were Celtic, and the Grants are pretty mixed. And so I think we may leave the Celtic element, in its effect on Mr. Allen, out of the question. We are all very mixed, except such Welsh as are of an unknown

prehistoric race. The name of Clodd is Teutonic, I think, but this philosopher may have Pictish ancestors for what I know. Really, of all modern fads, this of heredity from races that have not been pure for thousands of years is the least plausible.

Mr. Allen's father was a clergyman, which accounts for his anti-clerical ideas. Had his father been a noisy atheist, *he* would certainly have been a Jesuit. He was brought up in the country, luckily, but cared for no sport except angling, and preferred natural history and the use of the magnifying glass. After studying at King Edward's School in Birmingham, he won a classical postmastership in my own college, Merton, where I never had the luck to meet him. If he had chosen to win a scientific scholarship (which he could have done in six weeks' reading) he might have next got a science fellowship, and blossomed into a professor. But, characteristically, he stuck to classics (I do not believe that in his heart he ever *really* despised Greek and Latin), and he got a first in Moderations, a second in Greats. No doubt he might have gained a classical fellowship easily, or a good mastership at a public school, but he sought a professorship in Jamaica. I did not know him well enough to be able to guess why he avoided the beaten academic track. He fell in love, at College, with Mr. Herbert Spencer's philosophy; doubtless because it did not "pay in the schools," whereas Hegel (at second hand, as a rule) did pay. I do not think I ever saw a man open Mr. Spencer's works, when an undergraduate. Plato, Aristotle, the pre-Socratic philosophers, and *The Secret of Hegel* were commonly studied. Of these, I still think Plato and Aristotle, and Heraclitus and Empedocles, deserving writers. But it was Herbert Spencer all the way with Mr. Allen. He said much later, "Understand the phenomena, organic or inorganic, physical or psychical, by which you are surrounded." This is all very well, but I never could get him to glance at psychical phenomena, though he recommends the study. Probably Mr. Spencer does not care about psychical phenomena. In a letter of his undergraduate days, Mr. Allen says, "I have been reading Livy all evening." Why? I did not open Livy; I think we all believed that we could translate Livy at sight, and no harm came of it. "He was of the most advanced type,"—not quite, the most advanced type "chanced" its Titus Livius.

In 1872 Mr. Allen married and became Professor of Mental and Moral Philosophy in Jamaica, where, in four years, mental and moral philosophy ceased to be in demand. He came back to England and wrote a work on the popular topic of "Physiological Aesthetics" (1877). By this contribution to knowledge he earned "a frightful minus quantity" of fifty pounds. As far as gaining wealth went, he might as well have published poetry. So he took to popular science, by which a tiny income may be made by an extremely clever man in this educated age. "Carving a Cocoa-nut," "Dissecting a Daisy," such essays are not absolutely unremunerative, and pay, I conceive,

about as well as History—certainly better than physiological æsthetics or a work "On the Colour Sense." In twelve years this tome produced £30, and Mr. Allen was forced into journalism and fiction. Mr. Darwin, Mr. Spencer, Mr. Wallace applauded, but a man cannot live on applause, and only Professors can live by science. The public does not care whether "petals are in all cases transformed stamens" or not, and I confess to sharing this hideous indifference.

From these superhuman subjects of inquiry, Mr. Allen fell to writing in *London*. Mr. Clodd says that Mr. Stevenson and I were "on the staff." I don't think the paper had any staff, it was the oddest of periodicals, the staple of its contents was English verses in old French forms, and Mr. Stevenson's "New Arabian Nights." One day I was art critic, I know, and criticised Mr. Whistler's "Peacocks." The great difficulty was to keep professional beauties out of the columns, though to professional beauties the contributors were absolutely indifferent. To the best of my recollection Mr. Allen, on *London*, was—the military expert!

London faded from an environment with which it was completely out of harmony in 1879, and in 1880 Mr. Allen wrote a scientific ghost story in *Belgravia*. No man knew less than he of the science of ghosts, unless Mr. Clodd is yet more deficient in this branch of research. He tried to show that you could not weigh a ghost; of course he might as well say that you cannot weigh your view of a landscape. Impressions of sense, true or false, are imponderable. Then you cannot "apply any test of credibility to an apparition's statements." But each of us is only an apparition to every one else, and you can check the statements of an apparition as you can those of a fellow-citizen. He tells you something you did not know; to take a case familiar to me, that the drains are out of order. Then you test the statement in the usual way exactly as if the apparition was in flesh and blood, as we call certain phenomena. However, Mr. Allen "displayed scientific truth" (as *he* thought) in a story, and was asked to write more stories, and his tales were excellent, and he could live on the exercise of his fancy. It was Mr. James Payn who fostered Mr. Allen's genius for fiction; many a young writer is proud to owe his earliest encouragement to Mr. Payn.

Mr. Allen was not a novel-reader; I doubt if most novelists do read novels. Scott, Thackeray, Mr. Stevenson were greedy and multifarious readers of romance, so are most judges; but the mass of novelists do not read their contemporaries or predecessors. In this indifference, then, Mr. Allen was not a paradoxical exception. But one never could quite believe in his want of interest as to his own novels. No doubt he would liefer have been writing about the loves of the pismires, but he must have been a little concerned about those of his own characters.

A good deal is said by Mr. Clodd about *The Woman who Did*. One had always thought it a highly successful novel, but Mr. Allen

deemed that it injured him as a novelist. He wrote it "wholly and solely to satisfy my own taste and conscience." There is no arguing about consciences, but taste is a more definite thing, and Mr. Allen's taste must have been unusual. It is all very well to proclaim "the gospel of freedom between man and woman, as the basis of a higher morality." But on such a basis, it will take a long time to build a higher morality, and, in the meanwhile, the aunts have to look after the children. The gospel is one-sided. Lovely woman is united with a Moor, or a boor, and finds somebody else whom she likes better. Her native purity makes it her duty to go off with somebody, and so on *ad infinitum*. This may be a higher morality than the present, or Christian notion, that honour bids lovely woman to curb her passion, cut short her love in the bud, and remain loyal to Number 1. She need never have married him; having married him, let her make the best of him. But what is fair for woman is not fair for man. Mr. Allen never wrote a novel on the following lines. A (male) marries B, a pretty stupid lass. In a year or two A finds B out; tires of her, meets C. A high sense of morality urges A to desert B (who has grown stout, or is in bad health), and to elope with C. What is sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander. The higher morality ought to be applied all round. But Mr. Allen never, for some reason, wrote a novel to preach this part of the new creed. The fact is, that, even if custom sanctioned the system of non-marriage, a gentleman would not take advantage of custom; would not break the heart of a woman who had given to him her love and her youth. Of course the thing is done, but he who does it is—

"What you call a sinner; what I call a sweep,"

as Mr. Stevenson's hero says to the missionary. As a rule, only one of the two partners, at a given moment, wants to break away. By Mr. Allen's own ethics, self-sacrifice is a duty, so A must cling to B, or B to A, marriage law or no marriage law. It is the business of human beings to keep their passions in hand. Law slowly developed, and after trying every conceivable system, has evolved monogamy wherever men have been civilised. As an evolutionist, Mr. Allen ought to have recognised these facts. Not that monogamy makes everybody moral or happy. This earth is not yet the kingdom of heaven, where there is neither marrying nor giving in marriage. We cannot base a higher morality on free love; we must have a higher morality first, and improve monogamy by mastering the passions. "The conviction of a mission is fatal to the gift of humour," Mr. Clodd says. It was fatal in Mr. Allen's case, for his two moral novels were, in plain phrase, humourless absurdities, bad stories, and not good pamphlets. The second fell so flat, that Mr. Traill's parody must have been little read.

I never heard that any one drew from Mr. Allen's books the

idiotic inference that *he* was a libertine! This appears to have been done, according to Mr. Clodd.

Another relative failure of Mr. Allen's was his book on "The Evolution of the Idea of God." It was mainly based, with ingenious variations, on the ghost theory of Mr. Spencer. That theory, a revival in part of the ideas of Lucretius and of the old Euhemerism, is not "bottomed on facts," or rather is bottomed on the neglect or rejection of contradictory facts. For example, Mr. Allen's theory requires three successive stages in the treatment of dead bodies, ending, after the introduction of the metals, in cremation. But all three stages are practised concurrently by the very lowest savages, who have no metals. This is not an argument; it is a fact. Again, men are said to have revered ghosts first, then gods. But the most backward savages revere a god, and do not worship ghosts. Consequently the idea of God was not evolved, as Mr. Allen averred. He had not mastered the facts of the case.

"The current creed" does not seem to me to be affected by these discussions. The creed is one thing; its obscure, and, indeed, unknown origin, is another thing. Man is not a monkey, whatever his remote ancestors may have been, and our religion is not Totemism, or ancestor-worship, any more than our astronomy is astrology. Oddly enough Mr. Allen, who seems to have held that most gods, if not all, were once living men, appears to have thought that probably there was no historical Christ. This is almost on a level with the belief that there was no historical Socrates or no historical Jeanne d'Arc. In brief, Mr. Allen was a radical, with the radical's powers of scepticism and of credulity. His nature could not run a free course, because it was fatally biassed by the need of being in opposition to what is old. Others, myself for one, have the same tendency to oppose what is new, and not necessarily true.

Mr. Allen's large book was little discussed. The public does not care for the subject. "Moreover, he was busy in more remunerative fields." These he continued to till to the last. His creed was that

"A crowned caprice is God of this world."

Perhaps evolution (his god) is capricious; I had thought not, but "I speak as a fool." In literature he held that "the writers of the Elizabethan age are not to be compared to those of our era." He "discovered" some writers of verse who do not, to myself, seem equals of Shakespeare or superior to "sporting Kyd." All this was merely part of the external necessity of opposition. None of these paradoxes injured the amiability of his nature, or the beauty of his personal character. As a philosopher and a man of ideas, I cannot but think that he sacrificed himself unconsciously to the genius of eternal opposition. That is relatively a matter of little importance. His really scientific career was sacrificed, in any case, to the tyranny of circum-

stances. But those who knew him as a man, and a friend, will never forget his unusual genius for kindness, gentleness, and dignity of character; for common-sense, too, in practical affairs. His character was the crowning paradox, for it was in remarkable consistency with the religion which his intellect was unable to accept. Possibly he may have regarded theology as the blossom which fades, leaving the fruit of ethical practice. The fruit, without the flower, is perhaps less uncommon than theologians suppose: at least this one ripe example we recognised in Mr. Allen.

MRS. CONYERS TO THE RESCUE

BY IDA COVENTRY

I

WAS she *very* pretty?"

"They were of all descriptions."

"No, no, Captain Courteen; the plural number is of no avail!"

"On the contrary, has not one of our own poets declared that therein lies our safety?"

"Notwithstanding which wise declaration, our youths continue to believe in the power of singular charm."

"My years forbid that I should classify myself in such a category."

"Your years suggest the well-known fact that men of—shall we say maturity?—fall an easier victim to the little god than the so-called susceptible youths."

An incredulous glance from the eyes of the man.

"That is to say," calmly added Mrs. Conyers, in no wise disconcerted, "if the little god have hitherto unassailed him."

"Failing which supposition?"

"Failing which, the unmarried man of maturity is an enigma."

A pause, during which Mrs. Conyers surveyed the man before her, stretched at his ease in a lounging chair. Then leaning forward, she let her hand fall almost caressingly on his shoulder, as she said, "But my supposition did not fail in this case, did it, Courteen?"

"Your supposition was correct."

"Before you sailed in the *Alaric*, you were fancy-free?"

"I was."

"Even at the mature age of thirty-five?"

"Even so."

"Before you sailed. Hm! And now?"

"And now?" repeated Captain Courteen, taking possession of the hand that had lingered on his shoulder, "now I am being persecuted by as bewitching a little hostess as ever lucky man encountered!"

The hand was petulantly withdrawn, as Mrs. Conyers tapped her foot on the tiled floor and exclaimed, "What a childish begging of the question! Say at once that you think my interest is impertinence; it would be more candid."

"And an untruth on the face of it. Do I not know that your interest is most dear to me? Am I not for ever grateful for the same?"

The lazy attitude had changed to one of alertness, the eyes no longer shone with merriment, but were filled with a wistfulness that was not lost on Mrs. Conyers.

It was in a softened tone that she observed, "And yet you withhold your confidence."

Captain Courteen folded his arms across his chest, frowned, and seemed on the point of speaking, then checked himself.

"You started for the Mediterranean as light-hearted and free from care as man may be: you return the very reverse. You mention, both in your letters and later conversations, various fellow-passengers with whom you became more or less acquainted, including an army-surgeon, a commercial traveller, a lady missionary, and a duchess. The attractions of none of these being sufficiently great to account for your metamorphose, I know that—no! do not interrupt me, Courteen!—I say, I know that an unmentioned force has been at work. That force has had extraordinary effect; hence it must be of the feminine persuasion. Is it not so, my friend?"

Despite the stormy look that had been creeping over his face, the Captain laughed.

"And if I admit that your powers of probing a fellow's feelings are unique, what then?"

"Then we may find a satisfactory way out of the muddle. I hate mysteries."

The bright, incisive tone was well known to Courteen.

"Mysteries, yes, but——"

"Same thing, same thing. Most mysteries if properly looked into end in being ordinary muddles, which a little insight would have cleared at once."

"Would to heaven that any insight could help me at this time!"

The words were wrung passionately from the man's lips as he sprang to his feet.

Mrs. Conyers gazed after him. Then in her quick, graceful way she followed him to the low wall at the end of the conservatory. She stood in silence beside him for half a minute.

He could not see her face, but he heard the world of pity in the slowly-dropping words, "If insight be unavailable, then sympathy must do its best. Tell me, Courteen. I may be able to help you."

The silence that followed was only broken by the trickling of the fountain close at hand.

Courteen's head was still bowed on his arms.

He heard again the words, "Tell me. Let me help you. It is all I ask." Was there a quiver of the lips as they uttered the last few words?

Unnoticed, at all events, by Captain Courteen.

He raised his head at length to say, "A fellow does not deserve such a friend as you, Mrs Conyers."

"No, he does not. Let us grant it for the sake of argument."

Her laugh ended in a curious little cough, but she continued, "There are fellows *and* fellows, you know. I think you should speak for yourself. But still it shall pass. And now—she was on the boat, was she not?"

"She?" echoed Courteen mechanically.

"Yes, she; the girl whom you—love. You do love her, do you not?"

Mrs. Conyers looked into his eyes with a brave, undaunted glance, though her finger-tips were cold.

"Yes, I love her."

"Good. We are getting on! And did she—care about you?"

"I was fool——"

"You were fool enough to think she did," concluded Mrs. Conyers calmly, "until something occurred to change your opinion?"

Captain Courteen nodded.

"And this occurrence—what was it?"

"Her treatment of me changed in a day from friendliness—ah! more than friendliness!"—Courteen shifted his position quickly—"to coldness, almost as though we were strangers."

"And what caused the change?"

"God knows!"

Mrs. Conyers picked some dead rose-leaves from a tree; the fountain trickled slowly on, and Captain Courteen was ready with his answer when the next question was forthcoming.

"Had you seen her before you met on the *Alaric*?"

"No, and I sometimes wish we had never met. But no! I don't wish that! I can't wish it, for I only know what life is through knowing her!"

"Ah!" said Mrs. Conyers. A few seconds later she added, "And life and love bring storms, do they not, Courteen?"

He gazed beyond the rose-tree and the fountain, through the open door, while unfamiliar lines were gathering round his mouth.

"Every storm involves a calm."

He shook his head despairingly.

"Oh! yes, it does. Your calm will come, as surely as any other." She was not surprised at his continued silence. She shared it for a time, and then suddenly drawing herself up and throwing back her head with a characteristic gesture, she exclaimed, "You have faith in me, Courteen?"

"I have—faith that is hardly likely to be shaken after fifteen years——"

"Hush! hsh! sh!" cried Mrs. Conyers with an affectation of horror, as she held up a forefinger of that small, strong hand, "you must not mention years in that wholesale fashion, Captain Courteen. It is against all canons of polite society, for I am not as young as I was fifteen years ago. Stop! I know what you are going to say, but it is not true. Alas! I am *not* as charming and juvenile as I ever was, so halt, my friend, ere perjury be committed!"

The forefinger was very near his lips as she concluded with an audacious little laugh.

He seized the hand, imprinted a kiss upon it, and retorted, "You are just as young and twice as charming as when I knew you first!"

A low curtsey was his reward.

"Thank you, Captain Courteen. Our good fellowship having been thus amicably ratified, let us return to business. You have faith in me. Very well, you must prove that faith by a full confession. No half-confidences for me. Next week Mrs. Merriman and I are to join you at your shooting-box in Scotland. There you will tell me all there is to be told, and there, if possible, I will to the rescue!"

II

MRS. CONYERS looked well in a short tweed dress and gaiters, and was not ignorant of the fact. The knowledge did not lessen her enjoyment of a morning's walk over Scotch heather and moorland.

"Is Mrs. Merriman's headache no better?"

"No, poor thing, it is very bad; or rather, her dislike to long country walks is keen. Headaches are a convenient cloak for laziness and other sins, you know!"

There was mirth, not ill-nature, in Mrs. Conyers's laugh as she prepared to jump a ditch of considerable width. "No, thank you, Captain Courteen, no help necessary. What it is to be independent!"

Away she went.

"You never did a neater thing in your life!" was the Captain's admiring comment.

"Yes, I flatter myself I can jump, but it is not every one who thinks it an accomplishment. Did you notice the glance of disdainful surprise on the face of that young gamekeeper?"

"No. Where? How do you mean?"

Courteen turned his head, to see a tall figure striding away with a gun over his shoulder.

"Oh! Peterson. Your imagination is riotous, Mrs. Conyers, for I am morally convinced that no surprise or disdain could be so easily called forth there. The man is the personification of apathy, not to say gloom. I should dismiss him, but he works uncommonly well."

"A powerful face."

"Possibly. I have not studied it. He has only come lately; recommended, by the way, by a friend of yours, the Rev. Stephen Longstaff."

"By him? Then he'll do. Stephen can see through a stone wall as clearly as most people."

"So I believe, though I have never seen him to judge for myself; never spoken to him, I should say."

Mrs. Conyers glanced swiftly up into the face of the man beside

her. She was tall, but Courteen towered several inches above her. She was in time to catch the unhappy gleam that came and went so quickly.

"Where have you seen him?"

"The day I landed from the *Alaric*."

"Was he meeting any of the passengers?"

"Yes. He and his wife came to meet Miss Nugent."

"Nugent, Nugent." Mrs. Conyers repeated the name in a curiously soft, yet metallic tone, "*Mary Nugent*?"

"Stella Nugent." It seemed to Captain Courteen, as the name left his lips, that the very air he breathed and the ground he trod became imbued with a sacredness all their own.

He drew a deep breath of the glorious moorland air, and then turned to his companion with the words, "You wanted a full confession, Mrs. Conyers, but there is very little to confess. Miss Nugent was travelling under the charge of the captain, a personal friend of my own. We saw a great deal of each other—I have reason to believe that the attraction was not altogether one-sided; and it ended, or rather began, by my finding that she was the one woman in the world to me. We drifted on until the last day arrived, and Tilbury was in sight. She had told me who was to meet her, and I had asked permission to call at the hotel next day. Shall I ever forget that look in her eyes as she granted the permission!"

"You called at the hotel?" was the rather dry interrogation. Was there a limit even to the sympathy of Mrs. Conyers?

"Yes, I called. I saw her."

"And told her all you felt, I suppose? For pity's sake, get on with your story, Captain Courteen."

"No, I could not tell her."

"You could not carry out the very purpose for which you had gone? Faint heart, indeed!"

"Her bearing and manner had changed completely. I could not have believed such a transformation possible."

"Cold, do you mean?"

"Cold? Yes, like an icicle. She who had been the life and soul of all the passengers. And yet that glance—! I could have sworn she loved me on the previous day when we parted."

"Would it not have been wiser to have asked her point-blank next day when you met?"

"How could I ask her when she showed me unmistakably that she wished our acquaintance to end?"

The Captain spoke passionately, and Mrs. Conyers made no rejoinder until the top of the hill was reached; then promptly seating herself, she observed, "I think you are to blame for attaching too much importance to what, after all, was probably an ordinary reaction from the excitement of sea-life."

Captain Courteen planted his stick in the ground behind him with

both hands, stood leaning upon it, and retorted, "Ordinary reaction! Good heavens! You do not know her!"

"You are right, I do not know Miss Nugent, though I hope to, one day, when she no longer bears that name. Do not frown in that tragic manner, Captain Courteen. I cannot see your face glowering miles above me, and behind me, as it does, but I know you *are* frowning!"

She went on poking with her stick at the heather at her feet, waited for the rejoinder that never came, and finally repeated, "You are quite right, I do not know her; but I do know that on landing after a voyage many a girl grows frigid and unapproachable. We are slaves of convention, you see, and never more so than after a brief cessation."

"There is no conventionality about her."

"No?" said Mrs. Conyers airily. "There never is conventionality about the girls we love, is there? They always stand alone, exempt from others' foibles. Sit down, Courteen. I cannot talk with you up in the clouds, figuratively as well as literally speaking!"

He obeyed.

"Describe Miss Nugent to me. Oh! do not be alarmed! Her appearance, I mean. I am not on the psychological tack."

Courteen was silent. Mrs. Conyers flicked a speck of dust from his coat-sleeve before remarking, "You are *irritating*. Shall I draw her portrait myself? She is small, of course; very small. You tall, muscular men never have two opinions on that point. *N'est-ce-pas*, Courteen?"

He smiled.

"Ah! I knew I was right. You are dark. She is probably the same, seeing that physiologically speaking, she ought to be very fair. The physiological commandments go to the wall when love conflicts. You will tell me if my portrait fails in resemblance?"

The Captain nodded, and looked both interested and amused.

"I expect to find her slight, with clear-cut features and a good complexion, but no colour; and I should not be surprised, no! I should not be surprised—" Mrs. Conyers' eyes twinkled as she clasped her hands round her knee, "if she had short, curly hair!"

"How, in the name of all the gods, did you know?"

A silvery peal of laughter from Mrs. Conyers made a solitary bird take wing.

"Then I am not mistaken? Now, you will have to believe in second-sight, if never before."

"Tell me how you knew, Mrs. Conyers?"

Courteen knew how to throw entreaty into his voice, but Mrs. Conyers was proof against it and only laughed provokingly.

He covered the hand that had been so busy at work among the heather, and holding both it and the stick together in his own, he intensified the tone of his pleading. "Tell me!"

"Is it your turn to want a full confession?"

"It is."

"Then suppose I keep you waiting just as long as you kept me?"

"Suppose I keep your hand a prisoner until you condescend to enlighten me?"

"And suppose I tell you to release my hand at once?"

Captain Courteen looked at her, removed his hand, and said as he turned slightly away, "I thought you hated mysteries."

"Oh! what a grumpy tone from mine host! Truly love maketh him to forget himself."

Courteen laughed, but repeated doggedly, "You did a week ago."

"I did, and I do still; so now for my full disclosure. Far from it being a romantic one concerning second-sight, it concerns memory and intuition alone. What do you say to that?"

"It sounds interesting, but mysterious. Go on."

The pretty colour that was always to be seen in Mrs. Conyers' cheeks deepened slightly as she obeyed.

"Since you were a boy you have never admired girls with pale, colourless complexions. Hence my inference. Men are always contrariwise at such crises, you know."

"Oh, are they?" meekly rejoined Courteen. "Yes?"

"Don't be in such a hurry. Then with regard to the other matter: you once told me that if there was one thing more than another that you detested, it was short hair in a girl."

"Did I? What a crass idiot I must have been!"

He was gazing over the moorland, his elbow resting on the heather.

"Yes," admitted Mrs. Conyers serenely, as she replaced a refractory pin that helped to bind the rich golden tresses, "we can all designate ourselves crass idiots at times."

III

THE air grew chill that evening, and Mrs. Conyers clapped her hands at the sight of a fire crackling away in the drawing-room grate. A morose, thin-featured woman looked up in surprise from her knitting.

"Only an overflow of spirits, my dear Mrs. Merriman. Whose idea is this?" She seated herself on the tall brass fender and spread out her hands to the blaze.

"You will ruin your complexion, Mrs. Conyers."

"My complexion? To the winds with it! After all, of what use is a complexion? Mrs. Merriman, your headache has gone, I hope? Not? Ah, I am sorry. In that case, you do not wish to talk, so I will betake myself to the writing-table."

The thin-faced woman watched her as she sat, the firelight falling on the rich silk gown, the candle-light shining on the soft, white shoulders and gleaming hair.

"Where is Captain Courteen?"

Mrs. Conyers yawned. "In the smoke-room, I should imagine,"

she said. "Would you like to join him and Sir Anthony, Mrs. Merriman?"

The look of horror was lost on Mrs. Conyers, who had dated and begun her letter, and now seemed lost in thought.

The fire sparkled, the thin-faced woman went on knitting, and the wind sounded dismally round the house.

"Where does Steve Longstaff live now?"

"He is back in the old house again at Brixton."

"Oh yes, of course. Brixton *versus* the Scottish Highlands. Hm. Poor Steve!"

The thin-faced woman looked on the point of sniffing, but refrained. "Some would prefer Brixton, Mrs. Conyers."

No rejoinder. Mrs. Conyers's pen was busy.

Only for a minute, however. She stopped again, and drew abstractedly on the blotting-paper. She was still drawing when the door opened some twenty minutes later.

"Captain Courteen, here is Mrs. Merriman dying for a game of cribbage! You will not refuse her, will you? Alas! Sir Anthony, I see you have been defeated."

"Such is the melancholy condition of affairs. I am nowhere with a cue in my hand." Sir Anthony sank into an easy-chair with a sigh of relief.

"Do not believe him, Mrs. Conyers!" cried Captain Courteen, on the defence for his father's oldest friend, "he plays a very good game."

Sir Anthony threw up his hands deprecatingly; into them Mrs. Conyers tossed the daily paper. "That being so, you are justified in being unsociable. You were interrupted this morning, and I know you are longing to get to the state of the market!"

He returned the smile, cast a look of gratitude, and was soon engrossed in the current events.

Ordinarily Mrs. Conyers wrote letters with ease.

To-night the clock had struck eleven ere her signature was written. She fastened the envelope, addressed it, then rose and stood motionless beside the fire.

"It is quite time you came to bed, Mrs. Conyers; you are dreaming already!"

She started.

"Bedtime, is it, Mrs. Merriman? So it is; I am quite ready to come with you."

The thin-faced woman walked towards the door, Sir Anthony opening it for her.

Under cover of a light banter between them concerning her victory at cribbage, Mrs. Conyers, still beside the fire, turned to Captain Courteen with the words, "You are quite sure there was no change in Miss Nugent until after Stephen Longstaff and his wife had met her?"

Courteen stared,

"Quite sure."

"Ah! Thank you. Have I startled you? I am only wondering what can be done for a man who is too proud for this world. Good-night, Courteen."

"Good-night, Mrs. Conyers. I am only wondering why Heaven deigned to give me such a friend."

Morning had dawned ere Mrs. Conyers had closed her eyes in sleep.

IV

MRS. CONYERS, out alone on the heather, opened the Rev. Stephen Longstaff's reply to her letter, and read it for the fourth time that morning.

She held it tightly in the wind, which blew almost tempestuously around her. She did not object, she revelled in its violence.

"DEAR MRS. CONYERS,—Knowing you as I do, I need scarcely tell you that this matter on which you have written is one of sacredness between you and me, although under the circumstances you would not be unjustified in acquainting a third person with the facts.

"Miss Nugent's father died some years ago, leaving to me, as her guardian, the request, that on her eighteenth birthday I should reveal to her a terrible family secret. She arrived home from the Mediterranean on that identical birthday, and that very evening I had to tell her of the existence and release of a convict brother. She had a dim recollection of the charge of manslaughter being brought against him years ago, but had been brought up since in the belief that he was dead, her father not wishing her childhood to be blighted.

"Fearful as was the intelligence I had to break, I was not prepared for the result; I have never seen such misery in any girl. I am afraid her life is ruined, for she is sensitive almost to morbidness. Her brother was released some months ago, having served his time. He might have been a fine young fellow, minus the passionate temper which ended in this fiasco. Whom to pity more I know not: the sister, who is like a broken flower, or him whose fiery nature is just as sensitive as hers.

"After all, he never meant to kill. Which of course shall cast the first stone?

"I met him on his release, had the saddest talk I ever had with man (may Heaven defend me from such another!), and a week later I saw him off by the north express. I had managed to secure for him a situation as gamekeeper on a Scotch estate, an acquaintance having asked me if I knew of one for his friend, Captain Courteen. From all I hear, Peterson, *alias* Nugent, is getting on well. I knew he would, or I should never have recommended a man with so dire a past. You must be now staying with this very Captain Courteen. If you think fit, tell him from one who has known the Nugent family

for many years that the man who can win Stella Nugent for his wife will be fortunate indeed. I say this advisedly, with all due regard to her environment, for she comes of an honoured race, now for the first time under the shadow of a crime.

"Make what use you like of this letter.

"Disclose or conceal its contents, unreservedly or in part, whichever you think best, and believe me, dear Mrs. Conyers, very truly yours,

"STEPHEN G. LONGSTAFF."

Unreservedly or in part!

Mrs. Conyers thrust the letter deep down into her pocket and strode up the hillside. On she went till the top was reached; then throwing herself down on the heather, she gave vent to the bitter cry, "Steve! why did you give me such an alternative? Why did you? oh, why did you?" The moaning repetition was lost in the wailing of the wind around her.

Unconscious of time, she could not tell how long she had lain motionless.

"Unreservedly! Show him the whole letter, put it in its true light, and what will happen?"

Mrs. Conyers drew her arms stiffly down on each side of her, gazed straight up into the leaden sky, and echoed, "What will happen? He will be off to London by the first express, will see her, touch her hand, love her more madly than ever and—be loved. Oh! how I hate those slender, dark-haired girls! and how little I knew what devilry was in me!"

The sob that rose unwittingly was strangled, and a hard, set look crept round the weary eyes.

"Tell him in part, talk about manslaughter and hereditary taint, talk about anything but the good fortune of the man who wins Stella Nugent,"—through her closed teeth the name was uttered—"and then what will happen? He will waver. A Courteen marry a convict's sister! He looks that sort of man, doesn't he? After all, isn't it my duty to keep him from such a marriage?"

A few raindrops fell, but she brushed them aside.

"Duty? That sounds well from me!" The laugh was not a pleasing one, but Mrs. Conyers had involuntarily touched the very clump of heather on which Courteen's elbow had rested three long days ago.

The soft caressing touch of those fingers was strangely at variance with the stony expression of face—strangely at variance, until the caressing touch disappeared, the fingers closed tightly and yet more tightly round the branches, and, turning away from the sky whose dulness yet seemed too bright for tolerance, Mrs. Conyers buried her face on the heather, and fiercely longed for death.

"It was only friendship . . . after all!

"I knew it all the time, and he knew that I knew it. But he doesn't

know what else I know. No! he doesn't know—*yet*. . . . When shall I tell him that I!— Ah! what am I saying?" She sat up and looked wildly round, but no one was near to hear the cry of despair; nothing new in the landscape, but the mist being driven in from the sea.

"I could make him love me, I know I could. Let him give her up on her brother's account, let him refuse to marry into such a connection as I could paint (and who would not?), let him feel as never before the need for an outlet for his love, and then let me have my innings! Oh! I should score, I know I should!"

The ray of sunlight darting, at that instant, through the clouds, was hardly brighter than the softened gleam that flashed into Mrs. Conyers's eyes.

Stretching her arms out with a wistful appeal she murmured, "No, I cannot, will not give you up, Courteen! And yet, and yet—she comes of an honoured race!"

Slowly, very slowly, her head sank into her hands. With elbows on her knees she sat there, fronting the future that seemed to grow greyer and more hopeless as she sat.

A few tears were followed by sobs that seemed to be tearing part of her life away, and, having subsided, left her as weak as any child. Then it was that she remembered the wind and the rain, and rose to descend the hill.

At the foot she encountered Peterson.

Was it destiny that impelled her? or had she already made her choice?

Mrs. Conyers seldom hesitated. She forgot her woe-begone appearance.

Drawing herself up in her habitual way, she said imperiously, yet with a touch of sweetness that went straight to the heart of the young gamekeeper—

"Mr. Peterson, please let me have a few words with you."

V

A FEW hours later the thin-faced woman was presiding at the afternoon tea-table. Sir Anthony sat near enjoying his second cup.

"Is Mrs. Conyers rested?" he inquired.

"She was not tired. She was only lazy and desirous of finishing a novel, so retired to her room. Mrs. Conyers never is tired."

Captain Courteen, who seemed restless that afternoon, shot a glance of surprise at the speaker, said nothing, but continued his peregrinations up and down the long drawing-room.

"Will you not have a cup, Captain Courteen? You will wait for Mrs. Conyers? Ah! here she is!"

In she came; looking slightly paler than was her wont.

"Well, Mrs. Conyers, that novel must be hugely interesting?"

"It is, Sir Anthony, hugely. See! I have nearly got to the end."

"I was afraid your walk this morning had been too much for you; you scarcely took any luncheon."

"Not in the least. Thank you, Mrs. Merriman, not at all too strong. I never felt more vigorous. As a proof of which, Captain Courteen, I forthwith challenge you to a game of billiards at 5 P.M. precisely!"

The man glanced at the clock.

"By all means, Mrs. Conyers. I shall be ready in five minutes precisely. It is evident you do not approve of lingering over afternoon-tea."

"Do I ever approve of unnecessary waste of time?"

There was a general laugh.

"The healthy moral tone pervading your sentiments is refreshing!" cried he, "and yet there is a fair amount of latitude attached to the adjective you have chosen."

The clock struck.

Mrs. Conyers rose, and, followed by Courteen, made her way to the billiard-room.

She selected her cue, chalked it with nicety, and was in the act of making the first stroke when she paused, put down her cue and exclaimed, "No! it's not billiards I want, but a talk with you, Courteen." With a growing paleness in her face, which yet had a pink spot glowing in the centre of each cheek, she walked up to him with the words, "I told you I hated mysteries. So I do. Read that."

Courteen took the Rev. Stephen Longstaff's letter. The name "Stella Nugent" caught his eye, and he walked off to the farthest window. There was a long silence while he stood reading and re-reading the words that might revolutionise his life.

Mrs. Conyers was motionless. She did not watch him, but she felt every emotion that swept over him, and quivered from head to foot in sympathy as his hand closed fiercely over the letter, and a smothered groan was heard.

"She loves you, Courteen."

The Captain did not turn round, half the length of the billiard-room lay between them, but Mrs. Conyers knew that a clash of conflicting feelings was at work.

She did not move; even her lips were steady as she said, "You love her?"

"God knows I do!"

Mrs. Conyers looked up then. Her eyes glittered as they rested on the figure of the man so utterly unconscious, as the seconds dragged by, of the tragedy that was being played so near him. "And she comes of an honoured race!"

Had Mrs. Conyers's voice ever sounded so persuasively in his ears? The persuasiveness was not lost, it sank into his heart and had its due effect, despite the tenor of his immediate rejoinder.

"An honoured race. Yes! but its fair fame is sullied, blackened, now. A felon for a brother-in-law! And yet—her misery over him. I must help her! Mrs. Conyers, help me!"

Turning swiftly round he strode up to her, seized her hands, and repeated hoarsely, "Help me as you always can. What am I to do? Tell me, I say."

"Yes, I will tell you. You must marry her."

Her hands were cold in his hot, tight grasp, but her eyes met his unflinchingly.

"Marry her? Have a convict's sister for my wife! For the——"

"For the mother of your children?" softly finished Mrs. Conyers.

"Yes. 'The man who can win Stella Nugent for his wife will be fortunate indeed.' I know her by repute, you see, for I am quoting an undeniable authority!" The smile of sweet directness faded as Mrs. Conyers cried out, "Courteen, don't look like that! I can't bear it. It is not so very terrible after all. I know how you have always kept your name unsullied, and vowed to do so in the future, but you must not be tied by the letter of the law. Stella Nugent is a pure, true-hearted girl, who will brighten, not tarnish your name. In the eye of the world her brother is a felon. In reality, is he?"

Her words were making an impression.

Mrs. Conyers was not blind, and proceeded.

"There was no malice aforethought, no criminal intent. You have only to look in young Peterson's face to be assured of that. It was simply a flash of ungovernable temper. Are we not all passionate at times? Only sometimes fate throws consequences in our way, sometimes we escape. Peterson did not escape. That is all."

"Yes, that is all," said Courteen almost under his breath. He let her hands drop softly, and walked across the room.

"What is that?" She darted to the window.

He followed. "A slate! The storm is growing lively and no mistake."

"Mrs. Merriman will be growing nervous. Let us join her."

"I fancy she is on her way to us now. There is some commotion out there. What can it be?"

He opened the door and peered into the darkening hall. An old, weather-beaten fisherman stood there asking for Captain Courteen. "Sir," he said, "there's been a sad misfortune in the place. Two of our men, out in their fishing-smack, were making for the harbour, but they weren't quick enough, and was overturned as the squall come on. Peterson, your new gamekeeper, sir, as fine a young chap as ever I see, he were on the beach with me, and rushed in to save 'em. One of 'em could swim and was all right, but th' other was mad-like with fright, and clutched the poor young fellow that tight and convulsive that—that—oh, sir! they both went down afore my eyes!"

"Drowned!" exclaimed Courteen, a look of horror spreading over his face.

The old fisherman nodded. He tried to speak, but failed and turned away.

Mrs. Conyers laid a gentle hand on Courteen's arm, whispered, "I am glad you forgave him before you knew," and was walking noiselessly from the hall when the old man hailed her. "Stay a bit, ma'am, his last words were for you. 'Tell her,' he said, just afore he plunged in, 'tell her, the lady with the beautiful hair,' begging your pardon, ma'am, 'that I am doing as she wished. I'm going away; perhaps further than she thought.'"

Four hours later Mrs. Conyers was alone.

The storm was raging, but she heard it not.

The fire in her bedroom crackled and blazed, but she did not feel its warmth.

She stood before it looking down into the dancing flames, one foot on the fender, her hands clasped on the mantelpiece.

"So he has gone to her. He will be at the junction now, just getting into the London express. How he loves that girl, and oh! how he pitied her to-night! I would brave hell itself for one glance of such love and pity from those eyes. And she has only Heaven to brave! only Heaven!" Mrs. Conyers was not without a vivid imagination, and the firelight grew suddenly dim. "God bless you, Courteen. Truly we are all crass idiots at times."

SIENA

BY AUGUSTUS J. C. HARE

IF you are travelling from the south, the country becomes more and more riven by earthquakes, more and more parched and burnt by the fires of extinct volcanoes as you approach Siena. There are no flowers, there is no grass, there is scarcely any vegetation at all, yet the district has a weird, witch-like charm, and, in the hazy distance, the beautiful twin peaks of Monte Amiata rise majestically above the sweeping hills, which have no feature of their own. As spring comes on, even this wild district assumes a certain softness. A grey-green tint clothes the miles upon miles of open country—treeless, hedgeless, houseless—swooping towards one another with the strangest sinuosities, and rifts, and knobs of earth, till at last they sink into faint mists, only to rise again in vaporous pink and blue distances, so far off, so pale and ærial, that they can scarcely be distinguished from the atmosphere itself.

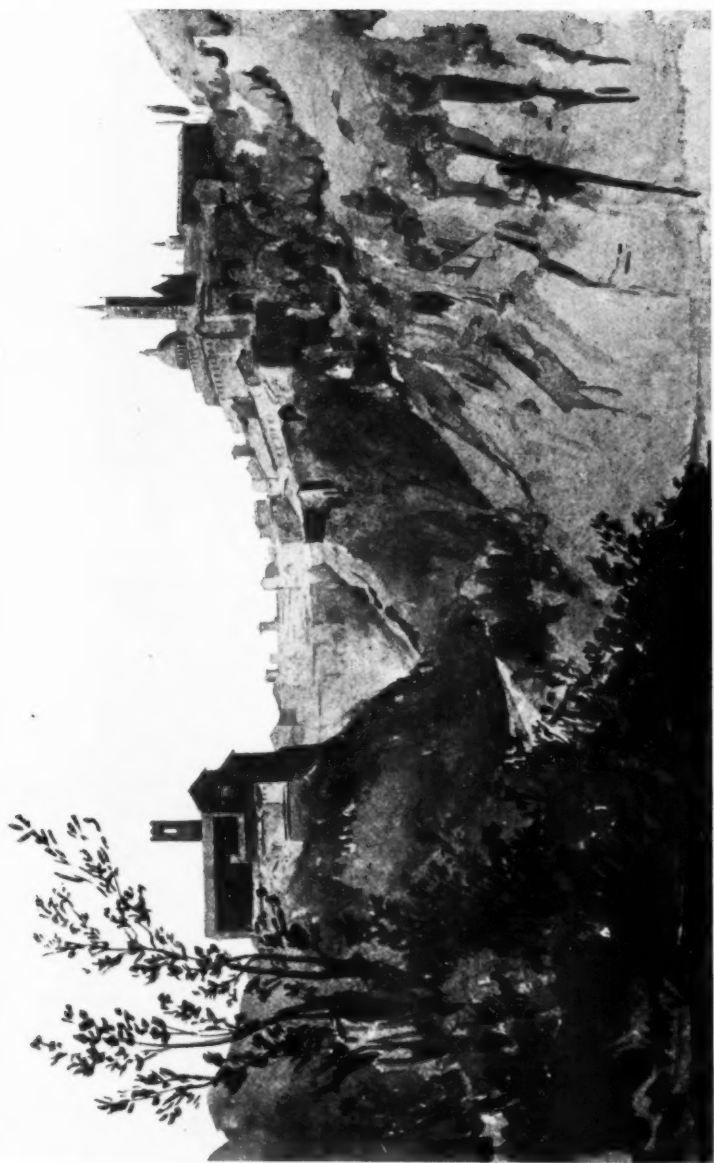
This description, however, only applies to the old approach by carriage to Siena; the railway enters many deep cuttings before it reaches the city, and then, at a sudden opening, the brown earthquake-riven hills are grandly crested by the great cathedral town—intensely stately and imposing:—

“Siena, bride of Solitude, whose eyes
Are lifted o’er the russet hills to scan
Immeasurable tracts of limpid skies,
Arching those silent, sullen plains where man
Fades like a weed mid mouldering marshes wan;
Where cane and pine and cypress, poison-proof,
For death and fever spread their stately roof.”¹

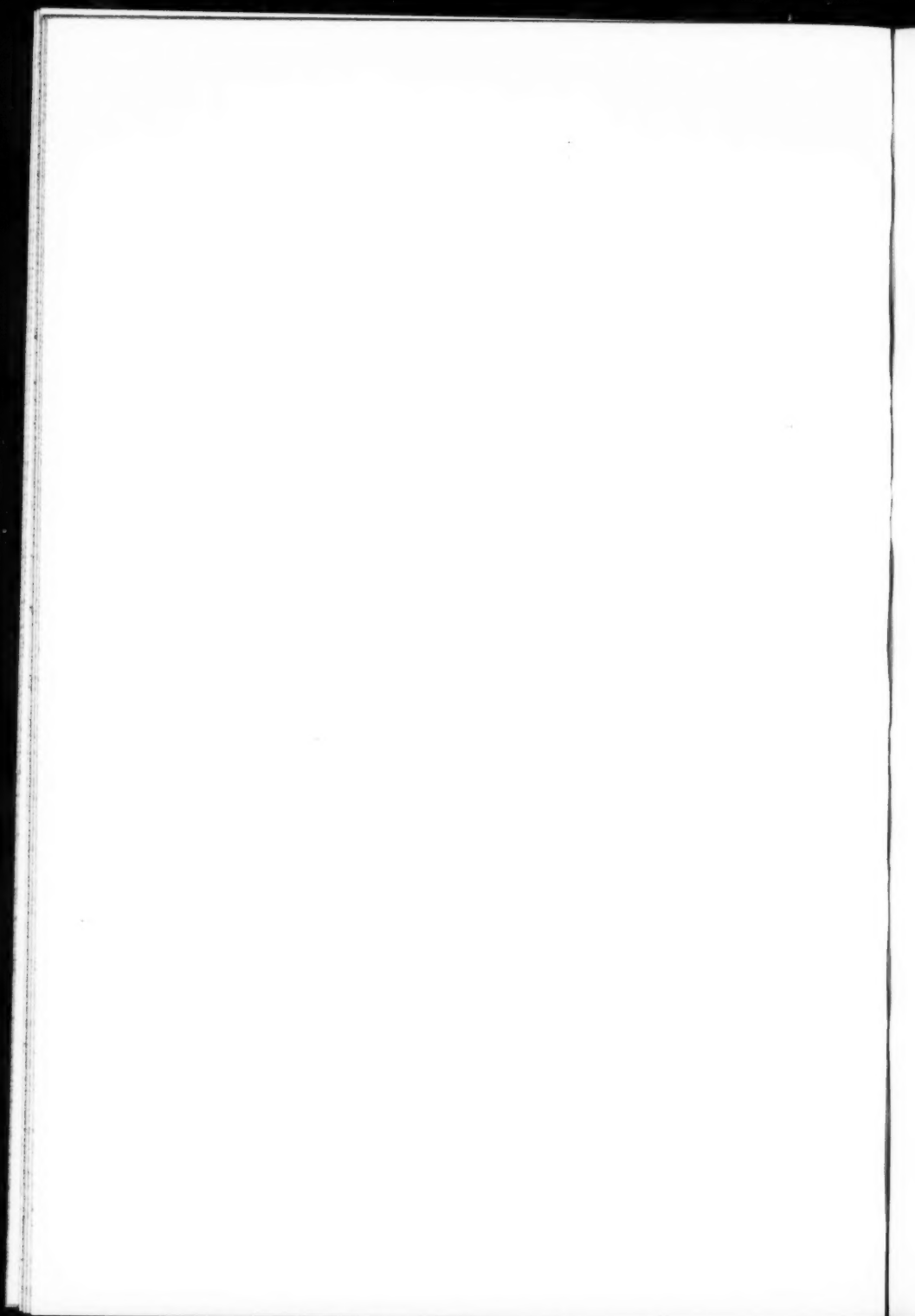
Few Italian towns are better suited than Siena for a summer residence. It is never excessively hot, and there are no mosquitoes; the art-interests are inexhaustible; the accommodation is comfortable; and the inhabitants are well-bred and pleasant, and far more cordial to strangers than residents in most Italian towns are now. “*Cor magis tibi Sena pandit*”—“more than her gates Siena opens her heart to you”—is the pleasant welcome which meets you as you enter the town gates.

The city is like a star, jutting out between deep ravines in long, narrow promontories covered with houses and crowned by convents and churches: and the centre from which all these hill-promontories diverge is the noble Piazza del Campo, completely mediaeval still, and surrounded by gothic palaces. Its south side is entirely occupied by

¹ J. A. Symonds.



SIENA



the grand Palazzo Pubblico, built by Agostino and Agnolo da Siena between 1295 and 1327, and surmounted by the magnificent tower of La Mangia. A museum of early fourteenth-century art is to be found in the paintings of its noble halls and beautiful chapel, chiefly illustrative of the blessings of Peace with Wisdom and Justice as her hand-maidens, and the horrors of Tyranny with Fraud, Treason and Cruelty, Fury, Division and War in her train. Below, in the Piazza, is a modern copy of the exquisite fountain which was the masterpiece of Jacopo della Quercia, but the original basin has been removed since the change of government. Conduits to supply fountains within the city were not finished till the middle of the fourteenth century, and then, in their joy at seeing its crystal waters gush forth, the people called their new fountain Fonte Gaja, a name which has always clung to it.

Owing to the extreme depth of its ravines, it is difficult to find one's way in Siena, but from the Piazza the Via di Città and the Via del Capitano, each passing a most grand gothic palace, lead along one of the high ridges till we come quite suddenly upon the glowing and sumptuous western façade of the cathedral.

It is of black and white marble, with a slight intermixture of red and yellow, but all its colour is wonderfully toned together by age. Its architecture is of the most exuberant variety and the most delicate detail. "What I never can express," says Hawthorne, "is the multitudinous richness of the ornamentation, the arches within arches, sculptured inch by inch, of the wide doorways; the statues of saints, some making a hermitage of a niche, others standing forth; the scores of busts, that look like the faces of ancient people, gazing down out of the cathedral; the projecting shapes of stone lions—the thousand forms of gothic fancy, which seem to soften the marble and express whatever it likes, and allow it to harden again to last for ever. The cathedral is a religion in itself—something worth dying for to those who have an hereditary interest in it."

Yet the cathedral of Siena, glorious as it is, certainly one of the most beautiful buildings in the world, is only a fragment—nothing more than the transept of the vast edifice which was planned by its architect, Maestro Lardo, and which want of money and the ravages of the plague amongst his workmen, cut short. The half-finished nave is still, as it has always been, a ruin. But the bits of the church which are completed, including the seven-storied campanile, striped in black and white marble, are of great perfection. Indeed the finished west front, exquisite in its complicated traceries, and deservedly admired as it always is and will be, is perhaps, by comparison, the least admirable part of the building, for it is so wide that the main lines are almost lost in the redundant ornament. "This church," says Symonds, "is the most purely gothic of all Italian cathedrals designed by national architects. Together with that of Orvieto, it stands alone to show what the unassisted genius of the Italians could produce when influenced by mediæval ideas."

The stately cathedrals of Genoa, Prato, and Pisa are to some extent a preparation for that of Siena, but this is far more beautiful. Here the arches of the more northern cathedrals are seen lifted high into the air, and time has mellowed the white marble which alternates with the black into an exquisitely harmonious tint of brown. The long lines of pillars are only broken by the lovely pulpit of Niccolò Pisano, finished in 1268. This he made larger than his famous pulpit at Pisa, as was suited to the loftier church. He has repeated here his reliefs of the Nativity and Crucifixion from his Pisan pulpit, but has changed the treatment of the Adoration and the Last Judgment, and added the Massacre of the Innocents and the Flight into Egypt to his subjects. There are not so many tombs at Siena as in most Italian cathedrals, but statues commemorate those Popes who are especially connected with the town—Marcellus II., Paul V., Pius II., Pius III., Alexander III., and Alexander VII.: and above the arches the whole chronology of the Roman pontiffs is carried round the church. "Larger than life," as Symonds describes them, "white solemn faces, they lean, each from his separate niche, crowned with the triple tiara, and labelled with the name he bore. Their accumulated majesty brings the whole past history of the Church into the presence of its living members. A bishop walking up the nave of Siena must feel as a Roman felt among the waxen images of ancestors renowned in council or in war. Of course the portraits are imaginary for the most part; though the artists have contrived to vary their features and expression with great skill."

But the great glory of the cathedral is its pavement, covered with the wonderful marble pictures designed by Beccafumi and his scholars, and filled with figures, many of them as grand as the sibyls and prophets of Michelangelo. Dante has been thought to have had this pavement in his mind when he wrote:—

"Monstran ancor lo duro pavimento;
Qual di pennel fù maestro, o di stile,
Che ritrahesse l'ombre e tratti, ch' ivi,
Mirar fariano uno 'ngegno sottile."

Other works of art are two marvellous panels by Duccio, painted between 1308 and 1311, and filled with tiny pictures of the Passion of Christ. And we must not forget a St. Jerome and a Magdalen statue, which are amongst the best works of Bernini. Forsyth, who was such a capital critic, admired them greatly. "Here," he says, "the sweeping beard and cadaverous flanks of St. Jerome are set in contrast with the soft beauty of a Magdalene, which Bernini had transformed from an Andromeda, and thus left us the affliction of innocence for that of guilt."

Entered from the cathedral is the magnificent hall called the Libreria, because it is used to contain the splendid choir-books of the cathedral. The walls are surrounded by the frescoes which were

ordered by Pius III. to commemorate the eventful life of his maternal uncle, Pius II.—Aeneas Sylvius Piccolomini, who—as a young man—was the ambassador from the Council of Basle to the King of Scotland, and was crowned as a poet by the Emperor Frederick III., and who, as Pope, built the wonderful town of Pienza, preached a crusade, and canonised St. Catherine of Siena. The frescoes, fresh as when they were painted, and a wonderful memorial of their times, are from the hand of Pinturicchio. Rio and others have maintained that he was largely assisted by the youthful Raffaello, but this ancient municipal tradition is now believed to have been a pure invention of Sienese vanity.

In the precincts of the upper church stand a number of interesting buildings, especially the Casa dell' Opera, containing a number of fine pieces of sculpture, and the Pellegrinajo, with very curious fifteenth-century frescoes of the temporal Works of Mercy. The wall of the unfinished nave ends in a glorious gothic door with twisted columns, whence a great marble staircase, in the open air, descends to the lower level of the town, from which we may enter, beneath the choir, the ancient Baptistery, or Church of S. Giovanni Battista.

Few interiors have more solemn beauty, more exquisite ancient colouring than this. The once brilliant frescoes with which the walls and ceiling are covered are all subdued by age into a most harmonious whole, and out of the purple shadows rises the beautiful font of Giacomo della Quercia, set with bronze reliefs by the three great masters of his school—Ghiberti, Michelozzo, and Donatello.

The cathedral which she loved so well is ever associated in the popular mind with St. Catherine of Siena, and the surrounding hills and valleys are redolent of her memory. As we follow the steep path from St. Giovanni, which descends into the valley beneath St. Domenico, we may remember that there the little Catherine, at seven years old, returning home from her married sister's house, with her little brother Stefano, sat down to rest upon the bank. There, as she gazed upon the church of St. Domenico opposite, she seemed to see the heavens opened and the Saviour in glory with St. Peter, St. Paul, and St. John the Evangelist standing by His throne. Her little brother shook her, to rouse her from her ecstasy, and when she looked again the heavens had closed, the vision vanished, and she threw herself on the ground and wept bitterly. But from that time she was a changed child, became silent and thoughtful, prayed to follow her illustrious namesake, St. Catherine of Alexandria, and—at eight years old—vowed to dedicate her life to perpetual charity.

Reaching the valley, and passing the gothic Fonte Branda, which was built in 1217 by one of the Brandi, and glancing at the sandstone rocks where the little St. Catherine made a hermitage for herself in childish imitation of the Thebaid, we come to a steep street. It was formerly the Contrada dell' Oca, but is now called Via Benincasa, for

here, on the left, distinguished by its sculptured gable, rises the house of Giacomo Benincasa, the dyer, the father of Catherine. Over the door is written, in letters of gold, "*Sposae Christi Katharinae domus.*" Here she was born in 1347, and here almost all of thirty-two years of her life were spent. Her veil, staff, and lanthorn, her enamelled vinaigrette, her alms-bag, the sackcloth which she wore beneath her dress, and the crucifix from which she received the wounds of Christ are preserved here. Hence she went forth to preach, and to comfort and heal the plague-stricken; here, to drive out evil and corrupt thoughts, she would scourge herself at the foot of the chapel-altar, and then would call upon Christ, her heavenly Bridegroom, to help her, when she believed herself to be comforted by His visible presence. Hence, when the neighbouring Florentines were excommunicated by Gregory XI., she set out on her wonderful mission to Avignon, to beseech the Pope to withdraw the ban, and spoke with such power, that he appointed her his arbitress, and left her to dictate the terms on which he should forgive his rebellious subjects. Hence, on her return, believing that much of the misery and misrule of Italy was owing to the absence of the Popes, she wrote those soul-stirring letters which induced the Pope and all his cardinals to return to Italy; and hence she went to meet him and escort him to Rome, keeping him there by her sole influence when he wanted to go back to Avignon in the following year. Here also she was appointed ambassadress to Naples by the next Pope, Urban VI., who owed his elevation to her influence. And here she died, her last words, as if in answer to an inward accuser, being "No! no! no!—not vainglory!—not vainglory!—but the glory of God!"

To strangers many of the stories of St. Catherine may seem like records of visionary hallucinations, but to the Sienese of her own time they were burning realities, and they are so still. "After the lapse of five centuries her votaries still kiss the floor and steps on which she trod, still say, 'This was the wall on which she leant when Christ appeared; this is the corner where she clothed Him, naked and shivering like a beggar-boy; here He maintained her with angel's food.'"

The house of St. Catherine is now one of the great shrines of Italy, and contains a fine statue of the saint by Neroccio, and frescoes of her life by Pacchia, Pacchiarotti, Salimbeni, Fungai, and Vanni. In the words of Lewis Morris:—

"Dear spotless soul,
Still through thy house men go, and wondering mark
Thy place of prayer, thy chamber, and thy cell;
Here 'twas the Lord appeared, and gave to thee
His sacred heart. Here, in this very spot,
Thou clothedst Him as He sate in rags and seemed
A beggar. All the house is filled with thee
And the white simple story of thy life;
Still, far above, the high church on the hill
Towers where, in prayer, thou seemedst to walk wrapt round
By an ineffable Presence; thy low roof

Is grown as 'twere a shrine, where priest and man
And visionary girls from age to age
Throng and repeat the selfsame prayers, thyself
Didst offer year by year."

Now, treading in the footsteps of Catherine, we must follow her up the steep incline to St. Domenico, the great brick church which rises opposite to the cathedral, and which is such a conspicuous feature in most views of Siena, for many of her visions and ecstasies took place here, and, though she never ceased to reside in her father's house, she took here the vows of a nun of the third order of St. Dominic. One of the few authentic portraits of saints is that of St. Catherine, preserved over one of the altars, executed by her friend, Andrea Vanni, to whom she addressed still-existing letters of maternal advice, beginning, "Carissimo figliuolo in Cristo," and in one of which she urges him to obtain a good influence over those around him, adding, "but I do not see how we are to govern others unless we first learn to govern ourselves." The portrait gives a touching representation of her sweet but worn and ascetic features. Her black mantle is drawn around her. In one hand she holds a lily. The other is kissed by a votary, believed to be the repentant nun Palmerina, who had long harassed her life by calumnies. Weeping, the saint had here laid these wrongs at the feet of Christ. Then He appeared to her bearing two crowns, one of gold and jewels, the other of thorns, and bade her choose between them. She chose the thorns, and, with His own hand, He pressed them deep down upon her forehead. Thus Catherine knew to suffer in silence was her part, and such henceforth was her invincible sweetness and kindness to Palmerina, that in time she repented of her misdeeds.

The Cappella di S. Caterina is full of frescoes of the story of the saint's life, of which two beautiful incidents are shown in the finest works of Sodoma. One tells the story of Tuldo, the criminal, who, condemned to execution, refused to confess that he was guilty, and thus to receive absolution, till he was converted by Catherine. When his last hour came she met him on the scaffold, saluting him as her "sweet brother," and it was her hand that placed his neck upon the block, where the last words he uttered were the names of Jesus and of Catherine.

In the other picture, perhaps the masterpiece of the artist, Christ suddenly appears in glory, and Catherine swoons in the arms of her sister-nuns, the expression of anxious reverence in their faces, and of fainting through happiness on the features of Catherine, being alike incomparable.

There is a delightful picture gallery, there are a hundred other sights in hill-set Siena, and the town is a starting-place for some of the most interesting excursions in Italy; but the Cathedral, the House of St. Catherine, and St. Domenico are three sights closely enwoven with each other, which not even the most passing travellers must miss.

HENRY LAWSON: POET

BY ARTHUR MAQUARIE

"IT is rare," wrote Lord Rosebery a few years ago, "that so young a country has produced so great a literary force." This was in a letter addressed to the widow of Marcus Ward, whose work had done so much to bring Australia before the eyes of the older world; but if Lord Rosebery's praises were in some degree influenced by the nature of the occasion, there can be no doubt that they were in great part a just and balanced tribute to the achievements of Australian writers. If, however, the same critic were to express to-day his opinions upon the same subject, it is not improbable that much of the admiration which he has professed for Adam Lindsay Gordon would be in some degree tempered—not necessarily from a waning appreciation of that poet's stirring verse, but rather from the enforced recognition that another has arisen with greater claims to the distinction of being Australia's singer. For though we may race with Gordon and feel the wind blowing ruddy in our faces, we sometimes fancy that we are riding in imported hog-skin, and the wind seems to have come to us from an English upland. Gordon was not an Australian born, neither was his muse. To sing of wattle-blossoms and camp-fires, and the wild rush and clatter of hoofs—to sing *of* Australia—does not give claim to be considered Australian. There is a first requisite of which the fulfilment is not to be discovered in Gordon's verse: something more than a subtle sympathy with the spirit of the land; a breathing, in fact, of that spirit. Kendall had it, yet he at times drifted right away into an unfortunate pseudo-classicism, and we find an insufficiency in most that he has written. A few years ago A. B. Paterson, whose *nom de plume* of "Banjo" had become known through the *Sydney Bulletin*, found himself showered with unmeasured praises on the appearance of his volume, "The Man from Snowy River," until another of the *Bulletin's* young men was moved to challenge his right to honour upon the very broad ground of fidelity to the spirit of the country. That challenger was Henry Lawson, who to-day stands *par excellence* the poet of Australia. It is not necessary to disparage any others, for Henry Lawson is far inferior to several other men in various respects. He has not drunk deeply at the crystal fount of the Elizabethans as has J. Le Gay Brereton. He has never attained to the crisp versification of A. B. Paterson. Nor has he the colour-sense of Victor Daly. But Brereton's culture is erratic, infertile, and disappointing. A. B. Paterson is after all too much a "Banjo"; and of the many other claimants in a continent where almost every one writes poetry, none can be found who so completely voices the soul of the land as does Henry Lawson.

In order therefore that we should rightly assess him, or perhaps understand him at all, it is very necessary for us to arrive first at a correct conception of the conditions of his country. A casual reading of his poems would lead us to think him in error on account of certain glaring contradictions which cannot fail to strike us—contradictions in ideas, impressions, facts. And though we willingly give our indulgence to honest old Walt Whitman, handling infinities and universes, sometimes with a too boisterous ecstasy, we cannot extend a free pardon to a lesser man dealing with the plain affairs and phases of life. It must be remembered, however, that Australia itself is made up of contradictions. Where to-day is seen a broad swiftly-flowing river, yesterday may have shown nothing but a line of dry shingle; or where now sleek cattle lie with full paunches in the rich shade, some months hence may be but white bones and reeking carcasses. The same dam will at one time disturb its water-lilies and blood-weed with furrows from the breast of the wild-fowl, and at another lie a slimy stretch of fetid mud in which the bees are feeding upon the rotting cattle, for the season has given them no flowers. And though this change from honey to carrion may appear fanciful, it is not only true, but it possesses a high significance for those who seek to understand Australian literature; just as the two worlds of day and night, of brightness and gloom, must be borne in mind when studying the literature of the North. The calm calculation pervading and ordering life in England is by no means possible in Australia. There everything tends to make life uneven, variable; and as a consequence the questioning spirit is aroused. There is more unrest of mind and soul in one homestead under the Southern Cross than there is in many an English town—more wild original speculation, more healthy dissatisfaction with everything that is. But isolation from a world attempered with the lessons of history and ancient learning, acts in turn upon the restless spirit, keeping the mind unsettled, the demands of the soul inarticulate, and giving scepticism no sane philosophy. Of the pastoral spirit you will find no trace. There is no genuine literature of "merry sunshine," for the spirit of the people is too self-conscious, too introspective, and the simple *joie-de-vivre*, the *livsglaede*—to employ Ibsen's pet word—is at best replaced by a hopeful striving, or a happy retrospect rhythmized with regret.

"And I wondered who would win her when she said her sweet
good-byes—
But she died at one-and-twenty, and was buried on the Rise."

It is from such a people as this that Henry Lawson has come. He is no teacher. He cannot be a teacher. What philosophy he has is of the "working-man" type, such as over one glass asserts one thing and over the next inclines to the opposite argument. He holds now with the levelling of the classes, and now considers the saloon to have finer feeling than the forecastle. An easy and a just summing up of

his social ideas would be to say that they reach no further than a general sympathy for the man who is down and a confused revolutionary notion as to the means of his betterment. He speaks at times about a general revolt of the downtrodden, and in a careless moment gives the whole task of the world's regeneration to "the influence of women." Like the people of whom he is a son, he rather chafes at what is than clearly indicates a more rational scheme.

He is, we have said, the true voice of Australia. He sings of the good days and the bad which stand in such contrast. So far from being a "despairing bard" like many of his compatriots, he rings with the unconquerable colonial grit—

"Twixt mother's arms and coffin-gear a man has work to do !
And if he does his very best he mostly worries through ;
And while there is a wrong to right, and while the world goes round,
An honest man alive is worth a'million under ground."

He is the prophet of cheerfulness and determination—

"Keep your smile in working order for the better days to come."

But as it is a universal law that the sorrows of life strike a deeper chord than its joys, one will come reasonably to expect that where nature herself is at times so serried with trouble, the poet's note will be instinct with the same pathos, and that this pathos should predominate. He exhorts to bravery not by drawing false enticing pictures, but by presenting the vivid truth and calling upon the best spirit of hardihood. For he is ruthless in his realism. The Australian bush is to him no place for idling sentimentalists twining vapid rhymes about the wattle-blossoms and evening's golden west ; it is a "Land of day and night—no morning freshness, and no afternoon."

"Land where gaunt and haggard women live alone and slave like men,
Till their husbands, gone a-droving, will return to them again ;
Homes of men ! if home had ever such a God-forgotten place,
Where the wild selector's children fly before a stranger's face."

He knows well how the sky looks to the drought-stricken squatter at the "sad heart-breaking sunset," and while he tells of rivers that are "strings of muddy water-holes," he must tell also of "the rain-swept wildernesses that are wildest of the wild." The hardy bushman singing on his way home is certainly a pleasant figure to contemplate and rhyme on. None knows better than Henry Lawson what real joys or simple pleasures are to be found "out back," and none has sung them more fondly—as for instance in "The Roaring Days" and "The Shanty on the Rise." Yet even through his joyous moods the minor chord swells in, and in his best pieces there is little enough of cheer. What, for instance, could be more strange to gaiety than "The Teams," yet what more true?—

"A cloud of dust on the long white road,
And the teams go creeping on."

We have seen those teams full often, and through his verse we can see them again:—

“With eyes half-shut to the blinding dust,
And necks to the yokes bent low,
The beasts are pulling as bullocks must,
And the shining tires might almost rust
While the spokes are turning slow.

With face half-hid 'neath a broad-brimmed hat
That shades from the heat's white waves,
And shouldered whip with its green-hide plait,
The driver plods with a gait like that
Of his weary, patient slaves.

But the rains are heavy on roads like these;
And, fronting his lonely home,
For weeks together the settler sees
The teams bogged down to the axletrees
Or ploughing the sodden loam.”

There is very little prettiness about all this, but there is the force of truth. The light lyricist has little to do with the sweaty teamster raining blows on his bullocks that “pull as their heart would burst,” still less has he any wish to sing the life of the swagman as it is. Henry Lawson, on the other hand, faces the duty, and achieves most marked success. For this he is well qualified, not merely by observation, but by his own experience. Many a mile has he tramped carrying his “bluey” (blue blanket); not always in discomfort it must be said, for with money in his pocket and his friend J. Le Gay Brereton for company, the roads cannot have seemed so hard. But there is conviction in his tramp verse. Take a stanza or two from “Out Back”:—

“For time means tucker, and tramp you must, where the scrubs and
plains are wide,
With seldom a track that a man can trust, or a mountain peak to
guide;
All day long in the dust and heat—when summer is on the track—
With stunted stomachs and blistered feet, they carry their swags Out
Back.

In stifling noons when his back was wrung by its load, and the air
seemed dead,
And the water warmed in the bag that hung to his aching arm like
lead;
Or in times of flood, when plains were seas, and the scrubs were cold
and black,
He ploughed in mud to his trembling knees, and paid for his sins Out
Back.”

Or again, to quote from the refrain of “Knocked Up”—

“Oh, it's trampin', trampin', tra-a-mpin', in flies an' dust an' heat.”

If some reader now begins to ask where in all this rhymed realism is the poetry, it must be conceded that Henry Lawson is not one who has ever aimed at any great height of style or choiceness of artistic form. He is the voice of a people that is little occupied with such considerations, a people that has a greater love of vigour than of sublimity. For sublimity is not reached or treasured except by those who have attained to a state of some intellectual richness, or, at least, steadiness. The sublime is never the attendant of uncertainty, whereas vigour is often the outcome of it; for when the mind is not perfectly determined it will employ its strongest arguments. One cannot look to find sublimity as a characteristic in a nation whose religion and philosophy are in a state of turmoil, and whose efforts in every direction are not yet graduated through the school of experience. But Henry Lawson, whose verse would seem at times to be a little cheap—perhaps even slovenly and wilfully commonplace—has shown himself capable of good work. The two closing stanzas of "The Vagabond" will amply bear out this assertion:—

"The sailors say 'twill be rough to-night,
As they fasten the hatches down,
The south is black, and the bar is white,
And the drifting smoke is brown.
The gold has gone from the western haze,
The sea-birds circle and swarm—
But we shall have plenty of sunny days
And little enough of storm.

The hill is hiding the short black pier,
As the last white signal's seen;
The points run in, and the houses veer,
And the great bluff stands between,
So darkness swallowed the far white speck,
On many a wharf and quay,
The night comes down on a restless deck,
Grim cliffs—and—The Open Sea!"

There is an elusive beauty and music in—

"I hear the fall of timber
From distant flats and fells."

Or take him when in a simple lyric vein, as in the charming song "Andy's gone with Cattle." What a pleasing gracefulness there is in the following quatrain—

"Who now shall wear the cheerful face
In times when things are slackest?
And who shall whistle round the place
When Fortune smiles her blackest?"

Or again—

"Oh, may the showers in torrents fall,
And all the tanks run over;
And may the grass grow green and tall
In pathways of the drover."

Music it undoubtedly has, and such luscious refreshment to those who know the feel of drought that there is scarcely a bushman breathing who would not be able to find delight in it.

To claim for a certain part of Henry Lawson's work any artistic merit whatever, were an idle task.

"Jimmy came to me and whispered, and I muttered 'Go along,'
But he shouted, 'Mr. Swaller will oblige us with a song.'"

The couplet might almost be attributed to Kipling. But just as we are able to read Kipling even at his worst, so Henry Lawson's worst has always the saving recommendation of *matter*. The first musical demand of a young nation is for good bold melody and free rhythm. This the poet must feel and conform to if he is to please. The first literary demand is for matter. And this he must obey without half-measure if he is to exist as a poet at all. It may seem a restriction, but it might more justly be considered a strength. No nation has ever fallen through the too great vigour of its manhood, but history points to many instances of those which have sunk through the excess of their refinement. With art it is precisely the same, and the longer we retain a veneration for the robust, the longer may we disregard the fear of failure and downfall.

No matter where we turn in Henry Lawson's work, we are sure, at least, of finding a sturdy something good for the soul of man. Whether he has to tell us of a bush dance, or a summoning to a funeral, or of life on the old diggings in the time of Cobb & Co.'s universal reign, we cannot fail to be struck with a pervading note of *camaraderie* and good temper. It is the most salient point in the Australian national character. George Borrow may inform us that the word "pal" is true Romany, but we know where to go in order to discover its meaning

'Or the last day on the lignum plain,
When I staggered, half-blind, half-dead,
With a burning throat and a tortured brain;
And the tank when we came to the track again
Was seventeen miles ahead.

Then life seemed finished—then death began
As down in the dust I sank,
But he stuck to his mate as a bushman can
Till I heard him saying, 'Bear up, old man!'
In the shade of the mulga tank."

The life of the country breeds such feeling. It works upwards from the tramps and downwards from the moneyed men who join in hazardous ventures, for everything in Australia is more or less subject to ill-fortune. One season, it is said, will pay for seven. Yes, but then those seven have to be endured, and at times it seems as though the seasons were dead altogether. It is little wonder that such adversity draws men together. Those who "meet—good-day, and who part—good-day," are they who "never have shared the past."

Possibly the English reader of this article will by now be saying: "Then either Australia has but scanty charms, or Henry Lawson is a pessimist." Yet neither the one idea nor the other is correct. If we learn too little of Australian beauty from him, that is to be regretted. "Our impulse is ever to depict life as more sorrowful than it really is," says Maeterlinck, and this is true of all who think honestly. But to tell of trouble and the gloomy side does not of itself make a pessimist, nor has pessimism the warm geniality and indomitable grit that are so characteristic of all that Henry Lawson has written. He is, in fact, an optimist. While making no attempt to unravel the master-knot of human fate, he is very far from admitting that the greatest good is after all a small matter. "*Y el mayor bien es pequeño*," sang Calderon, "*Que toda la vida es sueño*." The Australian singer holds rather that life is most sternly real, and that its smallest good must be accounted much and enjoyed accordingly. His tramp, when wet and footsore, can be happy enough to

". . . Camp in some old shanty bar,
And sit a-tellin' lies."

And the poet himself is at least moved by happy memories.

"Yet at times we long to gallop where the reckless bushman rides
In the wake of startled brumbies that are flying for their hides;
Long to feel the saddle tremble once again between our knees,
And to hear the stockwhips rattle just like rifles through the trees!
Long to feel the bridle-leather tugging strongly in the hand,
And to feel once more a little like a native of the land."

Even in his important poem, "In the Days when the World was Wide," while he bemoans the days that are past, his spirit bursts out with the assurance—

"The world shall yet be a wider world."

And now it is full time for a word on what is in some respects Lawson's finest piece, "The Star of Australasia." Having been written before any apparent signs of a war, this poem must be regarded as in a degree prophetic of Australia's present military ardour. It is certainly one of the best examples of patriotic verse which our Empire has made during the last few years—a recommendation which unfortunately stands for very little.

The poem opens with the prediction that "The Star of the South shall rise in the lurid clouds of war," and the poet goes on to speak with pride of Australia's sons that will march eagerly to the fray. We must have his own words:—

"There are boys out there by the western creeks who hurry away from
school
To climb the sides of the breezy peaks, or dive in the shaded pool,
Who'll stick to their guns when the mountains quake to the tread of
a mighty war,
And fight for Right, or a Grand Mistake, as men never fought before;

When the peaks are scarred, and the sea-walls crack till the farthest
hills vibrate,
And the world for a while goes rolling back in a storm of love and
hate."

This struggle will be the putting on of manhood for a youthful people. It will place them with dignity in the great world, and through it shall they feel and pulse with the "soul of the world." "They'll know the glory of victory—and the grandeur of defeat." Their breath will come deep and their eyes grow bright, and the children will run to the doors and cry, "O mother, the troops are come." For in the hail of battle is a nation born, or its lease of life renewed.

The "Star of Australasia" is a fine poem, clear in thought, true in cadence, vigorous and fresh in expression. Indeed, whatever may be said of his poorness of poetic imagery, Henry Lawson is always fresh in expression. With all his limitations, he has an incontestable place in the literature of our Empire; while for those who are able to break away from the established English traditions he can provide much real enjoyment, presenting as he does a faithful insight into the thought and feeling—so far as it is characteristic and indigenous—of the island continent.

Of his prose writings we shall speak hereafter.

LETTERS FROM THE NORTH

BY CHARLES W. WOOD, F.R.G.S.

AUTHOR OF "IN THE VALLEY OF THE RHONE," "LETTERS
FROM MAJORCA," ETC., ETC.

CARE AMICE,—My last letter landed us at Sörum.
"I must have seen all this in a dream," laughed L. with a puzzled expression. "Everything is familiar to me. There we shall find the dining-room," pointing to three windows with green shutters to the right of us. "And there our bedrooms," indicating the house in front; a much newer building than the old house on the right: the original station, which might have existed for two hundred years or more.

"Or are you dreaming now?" I asked mildly.

"Do you think," he continued, trying to solve the problem, and passing over my sarcasm with the contempt it merited, "that after all we have had a pre-existence, and that I came here centuries ago, perhaps in the body of Harald Haarfager, or some fighting jarl who turned the world upside down? I may have been Runic, son of Hoder, or Balder, son of Odin; or perhaps Horwendil, who slew the king of Norway and married Gerutha. In the latter case I should be the father of Hamlet, which would bring me into some sort of conjunction with Shakespeare! Can you follow me? Great planets are in conjunction sometimes. That would be interesting, and make me illustrious."

"A happy thought," I laughed. "We might at last learn the truth about Hamlet by means of your second-sight. Some say that Hamlet and Yorick were one and the same person. Try to go back in memory to those rude, eventful days."

"I don't object to the idea," returned L. "It is romantic and out of the commonplace. Anything to escape the commonplace," he laughed, with a shudder. "But it hardly existed in the days of Harald Haarfager—it is a modern creation, entirely the production of the nineteenth century. There was nothing commonplace about the pigtails and ruffles of our great-grandfathers, or their dignified, ponderous manners. But all this does not explain the mystery of my supernatural visions."

After we had parted from the two ladies at the pension, the horses, as the younger lady had prophesied, went off at a dashing speed, well knowing that Sörum was at hand, and that there, like ourselves, they would rest for the night. The shadows were gathering, the sky

was taking a deeper blue, all nature was beginning to assume that mysterious aspect so suggestive of the fine line separating the seen from the unseen, as though we were standing on the borders of both worlds, and by taking a step forward might pass into the Beyond and spread our wings.

It was a perfect evening: and as the sun went down, and one large pale planet trembled in the sky—"beautiful as a solitary star"—the hush and repose of the approaching Sabbath seemed settling upon the earth: for it was Saturday night.

And if the evening was perfect, so was the scene. The river ran beside us; beyond it stretched the plain, bounded by the mountains



NEAR OTTA.

rising in majestic outlines, serene, eternal, immovable, against the background of dark-blue sky.

The station itself was most picturesquely situated. Trees waved about it and rustled in the breeze, suggesting all sorts of ideas in the twilight. The old house was quaint, the new built with that pale wood, in that light and airy style, which has so much to do with the impression Norway makes upon all who visit her, the love they never fail to bestow upon her. The influences of other countries may be charming, but as they are more or less intellectual—the picture-galleries of great towns, the cathedrals and other architectural splendours of civilised Europe, the constant contemplation of the

mould of form and the glass of fashion—these influences are exhausting. Those of Norway are purely healthy, bracing, and exhilarating.

The little horses knew their way without any guiding, turned sharply round and came to an anchor in front of the old house, shook their manes, looked towards the stables, and plainly intimated that they expected to be attended to at once; we mortals might well come after.

For a few moments no one appeared. The horses turned restive and stamped the ground. Then out came the landlady from the old house; a tall, pale woman, with dark eyes and neatly arranged hair, dressed almost with rigid, Quaker-like simplicity. At the same moment out rushed from the new house a younger woman in the costume of the



CHURCH OF SEL, NEAR OTTA.

country, who received our luggage from the skydsgut, and marched it into the house as though it had been a mere feather's weight. All the younger women were dressed in costume, and added much to the picturesqueness of the station.

"Those rooms are better than these," said the landlady, pointing to the new house; "you will be more quiet and comfortable than here."

She spoke quite good English, at which we wondered, for she was evidently a woman of the country.

"I learned it in England," she said, when we complimented her upon her fluency. "Years ago an English lady took a fancy to me

and carried me back with her to your county of Kent, where I spent two years. I was young and quick, and in six months talked English quite well: in two years as well as they did. Then, suddenly, I never knew why, the *mal du pays* attacked me, and I had to return to Norway."

"Probably you had left your heart in somebody's keeping," said L., "and came back to receive it or to effect an exchange."

The woman laughed and coloured in spite of her fifty years.

"That may have had something to do with it," she said, "for I married very soon, and it was no new acquaintance. But I think our air and mountains were more in question. England is beautiful for the English people; we of Norway are used to grander and sterner scenes. I have never been out of Norway since then, and hope to live the rest of my life and to die in this place."

"Now let us see our rooms," said L., who was impatient to learn whether his "dream" was to be still further carried out. "I believe I could find them without assistance."

The woman did not understand the remark, and let it pass.

In the opposite doorway stood the girl with the luggage in her picturesque costume; a young, fresh, fair face, the picture of simple innocence and good-natured amiability.

"Elsa is waiting to take you," said the landlady. "You must choose the rooms you prefer."

We crossed the open space between the houses, half courtyard, half quadrangle, unpaved and rustic, the stables facing the newer house. Behind the old house the trees rose, whispering their secrets to the night air, outlined against the sky.

"At the back of this house there is an orchard," said L., as we followed the little maid upstairs. She tripped up lightly with one of the bags, her neatly-shod feet clacking upon the bare wooden staircase. There is a wholesome absence of carpet all over Norway. "We shall be able to stretch our hands out of our windows and pick the fruit. You will see. It came into my vision."

The maid for a moment turned to the left at the top of the staircase, but L. did not follow. She looked round inquiringly, and saw yet further inquiry in L.'s expression.

"Ach!" she cried, breaking into a broad, sunny smile, "I am wrong. How did the gentleman know?"

L. looked at me meaningly, and I began to shiver in my shoes for what might happen next. The atmosphere was growing uncanny.

"You look quite pale," laughed L., "but it is nothing more than a further development in second-sight, and is perfectly harmless. I cannot foretell your future, cannot 'cast your horoscope'—isn't that the way the 'seers' talk? Ah! here we are," as we reached the end of the cheerful pine-wood corridor, and the maid turned into the last room on the left, and placed the bag on the floor.

"This is your room," said L.; "mine is next door. And here,"

throwing open a window, stretching out his hand, and bringing in an apple; "we have our orchard. It was a shame to pick it, for it is not ripe, but I could not resist the temptation. Fräulein," turning to the maid—"do they say Fräulein in Norway as in Germany?—Fräulein, let us suppose that you are Venus, and allow me to present you with the apple. I am a little mixed," he laughed, "but, as Mr. Toots would have said, that is of no consequence."

The maid pocketed the sour apple without the slightest hesitation, dropped a very pretty little curtsy to the formidable giant in front of her, and inwardly resolved to impress her very pretty teeth upon the apple at the first opportunity. She then clacked lightly away down the passage, and in a moment had tripped back with the other bag, which she placed in the next room.

"So far my vision has come to pass," laughed L., "but here the vision ends. True, I saw the position of the dining-room, but I know nothing of its contents. The sooner we find that out the better, for as usual I am as hungry as a hunter—my chronic condition in Norway."

Having dispersed some of the outer signs of travel—not "the devastating dust of ages" but of the moment—we went down and found the maid in the little hall waiting to escort us across the quadrangle, a polite but unnecessary attention on her part. From the acrid expression of her countenance she had evidently found her opportunity and eaten the apple. Probably the day of reckoning was not far off. Then we crossed over to the dining-room, which opened on the left of the old doorway.

What we saw was a long low room, with a table going half-way down one side, spread with a white cloth. Everything was very plain and simple. The table was lighted by a lamp, which gleamed upon cups and saucers, upon sundry bars of soap-like cheese, without which no table in Norway would consider itself furnished. L. looked round questioningly.

"No," he said, "nothing here is familiar. This did not come into my vision. We must conclude Second-sight to be a sort of spiritual gift, and that nothing so material and gross as a dining-room is ever reproduced supernaturally."

"And yet you saw the orchard and plucked the fruit," I objected.

"The fare of Eden," promptly replied L. "I could fancy an angel eating a nectarine—could not you?—But raw ham and soapy cheese—no, that could find no place even on Olympus, much less in Paradise."

We sat down at one end of the table. The room was nearly empty. Two ladies were taking their supper: large cups of tea and delicious slices of brown leathery cheese cut very thin and spread upon bread. L. shuddered. The ladies bit their bread, and every mouthful was substantial.

"What would you?" murmured L., looking rather agonised. "Travelling, like adversity, makes one acquainted with strange characters."

But there were deeper depths to come presently.

The ladies, in spite of wafery cheese and bitten bread, looked quiet, harmless, and modest: such women as unconsciously awaken one's sympathies and appeal to one's sense of the pathetic: women with whom the world has gone rather hardly; who have not had their share of the good things of life, though, if they only knew, it has been made up to them in other ways. The law of compensation is universal and eternal; fixed as the stars, certain as the returning sun.



GUDBRANDSDAL.

We found they were Swedish ladies, who had not inherited the beauty of their country-women. Their faces were brown and rugged, though at home we could fancy the brown became pale, and the cheeks somewhat pinched. Their expression was by no means unpleasant, and they looked what we found they were—Swedish schoolmistresses taking a vacation and making further acquaintance with the sister kingdom.

The little maid, who had devoured her apple in secret, waited upon

us. The acrid expression had disappeared, and her fresh, fair, youthful face shone out in vivid contrast with the bronzed faces of the Swedish teachers. The maid, too, had her very pretty costume to set off her charms; nothing could be more unbecoming than the dress of the Swedes—unless an Englishwoman had been present. There are no deeper depths in costume than the Englishwoman abroad on her travels.

Considering that our landlady had seen something of the world and travelled in her youth, we expected a correspondingly enlarged mind. The commissariat department would be up to date. If the Swedish ladies had a predilection for bread and cheese, we should find delicious mutton cutlets *à la sauce tomate* and half-a-dozen savoury and scented dishes ready to appear at our bidding. We had only to wave the magician's wand. L.'s eyes glistened in anticipation.

But he waved the wand in vain, and presently had to murmur in melancholy tones: "Blessed is he that expecteth nothing."

The landlady might have enlarged her mind, but she had narrowed her views. Economy was her guiding principle.

After a long day's hard work, and our very insufficient meal at Aanstad, we were both fairly caught in the throes of famine. On inquiring for substantial dishes, we found they were not to be forthcoming. The one *pièce de résistance* over and above the soap-cheese was a plate containing a few eggs smothered in a napkin.

"Four," said L., counting them carefully twice over. "Any more out there?" he asked of the maid, pointing to indefinite regions.

She nodded her head. Yes, there were more, but not boiled.

"Then go and have twelve more boiled at once," said L., "and bring them in when they are ready."

The maid hesitated, looked perplexed and incredulous, but the tone of his voice was so emphatic that she prepared to obey.

"Be careful not to come back without the eggs," said L. "Twelve good eggs, lightly boiled, or I will cause that sour apple to disagree with you very seriously."

Even the Swedish ladies looked up in mild surprise at the extensive order, as the skirt of the maiden rapidly disappeared through the doorway.

"Sir," said one of them, speaking in subdued tones, and with a little deprecating smile in which there lurked a certain humour, "you will breed an egg-famine in the land, even if you do not terrify the cook into temporary incapacity, in which case I should tremble for your supper."

She spoke very good English, this Swedish instructor of others, but slowly and studiously, as though the language had come to her more by books than by practice.

"If you have at all gone in for science," returned L. with mild politeness, "you will know that one of the first principles is that nature abhors a vacuum, and——"

"It does not require a scientist to realise that very obvious truth," interrupted the lady, still with her little humorous smile, so restrained that she seemed to be apologising for smiling at all. "I have also learned it by experience. As a child I was brought up in a convent; remained there indeed until I was eighteen. But whilst they fed the mind, they too often starved the body. One of their punishments was that for small ordinary faults—such as falling asleep at one's work—there would be a penalty of twenty-four hours' fasting: and for graver faults—such as a hasty word—thirty-six hours'. I used sometimes to faint from exhaustion at the end, and my constitution permanently suffered."

"I wish I had had the punishing of those nuns, or sisters, or whatever they were," said L., looking compassionately at the subdued lady. "I wonder that you grew up a good Catholic."

"I did not," she quaintly returned. "As soon as I possibly could do so I left the convent and turned Protestant."

"Bravo!" cried L. "I am sure you never repented the change."

"Never," replied the learned lady. "I had seen enough of Romanism to be quite sure that to become Protestant was a step in the right direction. I took it in all faith, having nothing to look forward to but my own efforts, and not knowing in what way they should be employed. I left the convent, though the nuns did all they could to make me turn *religieuse*. For I had two useful gifts: a talent for teaching and for fine embroidery, each of sufficient service to the convent to make them wish to keep me. But I felt that I could support myself, and I have never failed to do so."

"You must have had courage as well as faith," said L. "To face the world suddenly, as you appear to have done, must have seemed a stupendous undertaking."

"Faith begets courage," replied the Swedish lady, who had now finished her *bonne bouche* of bread and cheese, and was calmly and contemplatively stirring her tea. "But my courage was rather begotten of ignorance. I knew not the world or what I was undertaking, and when the knowledge came I half shrank from what I had done."

"But you did not repent? Surely you did not turn back after putting your hand to the plough?" said L.

"Never once," shaking her head to and fro. "I have had many a struggle, and if now and then I went rather short of food, well, I had learned the lesson of endurance in the convent. But I made way by little and little, and now I am quite prosperous. This lady is my partner. We have quite a flourishing school in Stockholm, and people will tell you that Miss Erichsen has a genius for teaching. That is my poor humble self."

"No doubt you have," said L. "Do you give lessons to young men in Swedish and Norwegian? If so, I would enter myself as a pupil and join your classes."

"Bewahr!" cried Miss Erichsen in horror-stricken tones, smiling,

and colouring through her bronze. "Ours is only a young ladies' establishment. And difficult enough they are to manage. Young men would drive me mad. I do not understand the masculine temperament."

"For that reason let me assure you that you malign it," laughed L. "Young men are by no means such a handful to manage as schoolgirls."

"You may be an exception, sir; I think you are," returned the lady, contemplating her teacup as though she saw in it a key to human nature. "But let me assure you that in Stockholm the young men are very bad; simply demons incarnate; and neither parents nor guardians, neither pastors nor masters, have the least influence over them."

"They should be turned over to the life you forsook," laughed L. "Consigned wholesale to a monastery, until starving and reflection, penances and midnight masses, brought them to a sedate and reasonable frame of mind."

"But they are mostly Protestant," returned Miss Erichsen. "And even if they were not—no, the influence of the cloister can never be for good. If I had my way, convents, monasteries, lay sisterhoods and lay brotherhoods, all should be swept away for ever."

"You speak strongly and positively," said L.

"I feel so," returned the lady. "The persecutions I went through in the days of my youth—I and hundreds of others—can no more fade from my mind than their evil effects can be stamped out of my weakened constitution."

The four eggs had been disposed of and almost forgotten, and now the door opened and the maid appeared with a soup-plate in which reposed a dozen eggs carefully packed in a napkin. This was triumphantly placed on the table and immediately appropriated by L. He politely offered them to Miss Erichsen and her companion, and the quiet attention was as politely refused. Miss Erichsen shook her head.

"Eggs are impossible after cheese," she said. "And we have already had our eggs—though not quite a dozen," with the little humorous smile still visible. "Nevertheless, perhaps the day has been in the years gone by when I could have been equal even to that conjuring feat."

"It will not take us long to conjure," laughed L., as he handed me the plate and proceeded to slice off the top of one of the eggs for his own benefit. "We have come from Pöfös to-day, have been travelling for twelve hours, and only had a very light refreshment at Aanstad. It is a disgrace to Sörum that they have no substantial dishes to give us. The station ought to be reported at headquarters."

"I think you will not exactly starve, all the same," said Miss Erichsen dryly. "And they have some very good jam and marmalade, if you like to ask for it. The landlady learned to make it in

the English way when she was in England years ago. And the bread, as you see, may be taken à discrétion, as the French say."

"Jam and marmalade!" cried L., turning to the startled waiting-maid. "And you have never brought them! A large pot of each at once."

The maid clacked across the room in her little Norwegian shoes, her skirts swinging to and fro with the hurry she made; and diving into a huge cupboard, which almost swallowed up her small body, she soon reappeared with two white pots done up quite in the English fashion. These she placed before L. with a beaming expression; and in less than no time very good jam and marmalade were disclosed to view.

"They will of course make you pay extra for it," said the Swedish lady, "but not exorbitantly."

"If they charge their weight in gold for the pots," laughed L., "it cannot be helped. Marmalade goes extremely well with tea," he added. "Tea-tasters, you know, always eat orange-peel, when they are buying tea, to bring out the flavour. Now pray do me the favour of initiating this pot with a fresh cup. The tea really requires the aid of extreme thirst or marmalade to be in the least degree palatable."

"You are very kind," returned Miss Erichsen modestly. "Marmalade is a weakness of mine, perhaps because I have so seldom taken it. It is impossible to refuse your kindness."

And helping herself and her friend with a liberality that was only secured by a little pressing, the pot was duly returned into our keeping.

The twelve eggs were disposed of—in what proportion I will not say. Then the jam and the marmalade had their turn; and during this process the enormous family teapot, inexhaustible as an Eastern well, was brought into frequent requisition.

"I think we might call this a revival meeting," said L., when the teapot was nearly empty, the vacant eggshells looked very forlorn on the plates, and one had to gaze quite far into the jam-pots to see the jam. After all we had managed to make a meal, and he certainly looked far less diaphanous than when he had first sat down. "Miss Erichsen," he continued, "do you ever have revival meetings in Stockholm?"

"Of this description, yes," smiled the lady; "but in a religious sense very seldom. If we had, Stockholm might be the better for them. It is a dissipated city, and on Sundays you see more intoxication than in any other town I was ever in. True, I have not been in many of the great towns of Europe. My life has been devoted to hard work rather than to pleasure."

At this moment, I perceived that L. suddenly turned rather pale, and, metaphorically speaking, pricked up his ears—I do not mean to suggest that he has ears capable of performing this acrobatic feat. He listened—and he has very acute senses. We had reached the deeper depths.

"The three Germans," he said, after a pause. "I recognise their voices. This is a calamity. We shall soon be treated to a second edition of *Die Wacht am Rhein*. Lucky that we have finished. I vote we break up the assembly. Miss Erichsen, do you proceed on your travels to-morrow?"

"Ah, no, sir. We travel leisurely, as becomes middle-aged spinsters. And we like to make Sunday a day of rest. To-morrow we specially want to go to the old church of Vaage, which you passed on the right about a mile away as you came along. A little of it, they say, dates back to the beginning of the twelfth century. Our religion, like our hills, stands firm and sure. Whenever I see these



IN THE GUDBRANDSDAL.

old churches in the mountains, I always think of Luther's hymn: *Ein Feste Burg ist unser Gott*. Luther and Bach—what a combination of mighty power!"

L.'s ears had not deceived him. The door opened, and in walked the aggressive Germans who had that morning taken possession of Aanstad. The room immediately seemed filled with a noisy multitude. Our little maid would not condescend to wait upon them, but summoned another of the maids to take her turn. In the twinkling of an eye she had caught up the jam-pots and stowed them away in the great cupboard. Black bread made its appearance, and as we all left the room, we heard an order given for whisky and beer.

Where the Germans had learned to drink whisky, was an unsolved problem—certainly not in their own country; but we strongly suspected that the “whisky” brought them was nothing more than the white spirit distilled in Norway, for the sale of which a special license is necessary.

In the yard everything was quiet. Our ponies were in their stables, the carriages reposed in a corner. There was still some light in the sky, though many stars shone; that exquisite light which often remains long after the sun has gone down. It was the very hour and influence for a walk, and so carry out the old proverb. The two Swedish ladies stood to wish us good-night.

“And good-bye also, I am afraid,” said L., “for we are off early to-morrow morning. Our time is limited.”

“Ah, you have health and strength,” returned Miss Erichsen, with a little smile in which sadness had taken the place of humour. “Our young and frisky days are over; yours, sir, have hardly begun, and I congratulate you on still being master of the world. We middle-aged women, for whom the afternoon shadows are lengthening, must make haste slowly. So we retire early; sometimes almost go to bed with the sun.”

We all shook hands—travelling friends are quickly made—and the two ladies, no longer young, not at all beautiful, but evidently with hearts beating in the right places, quietly walked across the yard in the darkening twilight, and disappeared through the doorway of the new house.

As we ourselves turned out of the yard into the road, we caught sight of the flying skirts of our little maid Elsa, hurrying after the ladies to offer her services. She evidently would have nothing to say to the noisy Germans.

Nothing could exceed the quietness and repose of the scene; nothing could be more lovely than the sleeping plain and the mountains that stretched through the valley in an apparently endless chain, their peaks and undulations clearly outlined against the purple sky. The river, deep and placid to-night, pursued its swift course towards Otta, where it came into the region of railways and life and movement; where men and women crowded and went to and fro. Here, absolute solitude reigned. Insensibly we turned to the right, the way we had come, and the quiet road and calm evening, the brilliancy of the stars and the grandeur of the landscape led us onwards.

Then we came up to the pension where we had parted from the two ladies. Everything looked the emblem of peace, and the windows were all open to the night air. A few people moved about the lawn, and about a hundred yards down the road our afternoon acquaintances were quietly walking; the elder, with her abundant white hair, leaning on the arm of the younger. The repose of the evening seemed to have fallen upon them as they moved along with no covering upon their heads. We soon overtook them.

"The beauty of the night has also beguiled you," said the younger lady, "and I am not surprised. There is no country like Norway for these after-sunset effects. The farther north we go, the more beautiful they are. My great ambition is one day to get to the North Pole, but my aunt objects."

"Naturally," replied the older lady. "We should be rather in the way on board the *Fram*, or any other expedition, and Captain Nansen—who is a friend of ours, by the way—would find himself rather handicapped and foiled if in looking after two ladies he missed the North Pole itself."

"Perhaps your niece would moderate her ambition," said L., "and be contented with the North Cape? That is already something."

"The North Cape?" returned the younger lady. "I have been there as many times as I have fingers on my hands. And I never went to the summit without being drenched by a hailstorm. The North Cape is a mere bagatelle, and a very uncomfortable one too. Not even a sunset in July."

"And six months after, not even a sunrise," laughed L. "You see there are compensations for too much sunshine. Now I have never been to the North Cape, and should be glad to get there in spite of perpetual daylight. Sunshine to me represents life."

"Wait until you do get there," returned Miss Aschenberg—for such we found both the ladies were named. "Wait until you do get there. And if at the end of a week of daylight and sunshine you do not long for night and darkness, I give you full permission never to trust me again. Oh, sir, He who made the world knew what was best for mankind: darkness for sleep and rest, and sunlight for work."

"The night cometh when no man can work," murmured the older lady. "That is fast coming for me, with my seventy years. But that only applies to this world. There will be plenty of work and light in the next. And here we come to the old church, which points the way to the skies."

We had strolled up the road, and turning to the left amongst the quaint old houses, the ancient church stood back in its enclosure. It was a very picturesque object in a country that has nothing to boast of in the way of architecture. Under the dark evening sky and pale stars it looked the very essence of divine calm, and seemed to shed abroad a sacred influence.

The building was closed, and it was too late to seek admittance.

Light streamed from the windows of a house not far off, and in a small plain room we discerned the figure of the minister poring over a volume at a table.

"Studying to-morrow's sermon," said the old lady; "and excellently he preaches. He is a good and holy man, as so many of these ministers in these retired, out-of-the-world spots are. They come into contact with simple natures; are simple themselves; the eye is single and the heart is good. So they grow in holiness. The great dramas

and tragedies of life, the great crimes that convulse a crowded community, pass them by. Ah! they are to be envied, with their short and simple annals, their freedom from ambition; only seeking to lead souls to paradise. Of course I see all this from my seventy years; I see how poor is time in comparison with eternity; how ephemeral the pleasures of the world contrasted with heaven. You, sir," turning to L., "look at it all from the other end of the telescope. You have so long a life before you that time itself must seem everlasting. But, dear me! a sermon—and I am not a minister. You may well say, 'Physician, heal thyself!' and before such a re-



BRAENDHAUGEN.

proof what answer can I give? Nothing but silence. Accusing conscience makes cowards of us all!"

"I am sure you can have very little upon your conscience," said the niece, looking affectionately at the old lady. And certainly if the face were any index to the soul within, it must have been as pure and unspotted as soul in this sin-stained world can be.

We went and stood on the long bridge and watched the still waters of the Otta hurrying onwards to the sea. Twilight was fast fading into night, but there was still a certain faint reflection upon the surface of the river. It looked silent and deep; the more distant hills portentous and exaggerated; there were trees about us that whispered

mysteriously ; here and there the light of a lamp shone from a solitary window ; the air, though pure and bracing, was warm, almost oppressive.

"A midsummer night in August," said Miss Aschenberg. "If Mendelssohn's fairy music would only come forth on the night air from one of those windows, time and place and circumstance would be perfect. My dear aunt, if I were only a magician to place a piano at your feet, that you might take us to an enchanted world ! My aunt is one of the greatest musicians in Denmark, in a private way, of course," explained the younger lady. "For you must know that we come from Denmark. We live in that dearest of all small capitals, Copenhagen."



CHURCH OF DOVRE.

"It would be more sensible to defer Mendelssohn's Midsummer Night's music to to-morrow," laughed Miss Aschenberg, "and wend our way back to the pension and to bed. The evening is later than it was, if not late."

"To-morrow is a day of rest," returned the niece ; "we have time to repose ourselves."

"It may not be a day of rest for these gentlemen," objected the aunt ; "and the air of Norway and our mode of travelling demand much sleep."

So talking we returned to the pension, where again we had to part

from the ladies. The lawn was now vacant; several had evidently retired to their rooms; lights gleamed from closed upper windows. Ten o'clock struck from the church as we stood; a deep-toned bell that startled the still air.

"Oh, that iron tongue!" cried Miss Aschenberg. "How it reminds us of the passing of time. I often think of that motto I once saw on an old, old sundial: '*Rien n'est plus certain que la mort; rien plus incertain que son heure.*' They say that man thinks all men mortal but himself; he should remember those words."

"I at any rate will remember them," said L., "though you say that at my age time must seem everlasting. And now we must go our way and dream of Mendelssohn and Titania and the forest revels. And you will go yours, and we shall never meet again."

"Who knows?" returned Miss Aschenberg. "The world is smaller than we imagine. But wherever you may be, may happiness and success attend you. An old woman's wish can do no harm; and if you have any desire for an old woman's benediction, it is yours."

And thus we shook hands and parted.

"Each went his way at his own pace:
Each went to fill his separate place."

We went down the road, which now seemed quieter and lonelier than ever. The river kept us company with its murmur; the hills had put on their impenetrable gloom; the stars shone brilliantly in the night sky. In some trees on our left the owls were calling. Strange, weird birds, with their wonderful eyes, their look of wisdom, and their noiseless flight. Minerva might well choose them for her companions.

At Sörum the station was now closed and silent. Every one seemed to have retired, but the door of the new house was open and our passage was free. The Swedish ladies no doubt were steeped in slumber, dreaming of art and science and endless classes; tasks that went on for ever. Even the three Germans had sunk into silence, a blessing for which we were devoutly thankful.

We quietly made our way up to our rooms, and ere long were also sleeping the sleep of the just. As Miss Aschenberg had said, constant travelling through the fine free air of Norway can have but one result.

The night seemed to pass as a flash, and we awoke to another perfect day: a day of such intense heat as we had seldom remembered. The sky was without a cloud; the sun grew into a fiery furnace as the day went on.

We rose early and were the first in the field. As yet the morning was fresh and exhilarating, the sky that clear, transparent blue peculiar to Norway.

Our Quaker-like landlady stood in front of her porch, if anything more prim and neat than yesterday, more than ever, no doubt, inclined to economy; for virtues and vices do not stand still—they grow.

Elsa, our little waiting-maid, was also in evidence, prepared to produce twelve boiled eggs if they were ordered. But this morning was not last night; our desires were much more moderate.

It was deliciously quiet at this early hour; a Sabbath stillness seemed to reprove one for continuing our travels when we should be at rest: but necessity has no law—especially in Norway; and with regret we had to ask Madame to order the carriages to be made ready. To her the order excited no surprise: all days are alike for travelling in this land of the North.

"You have a long day's journey, sirs, and you do well to start early," she remarked. "Dombaas seems the other ends of earth from here, but you have a magnificent experience before you. What can exceed the grandeur of the Dovrefjeld? Only it is going to be very hot; by certain signs, I should say the hottest day of the year."

Breakfast was merely a repetition of last night's supper on a lighter scale; and when it was over, we found carriages ready and the skydsgut waiting our pleasure. There were still no other signs of life about the place; and as we turned out of the yard—Madame wishing us a pleasant journey and a successful day, and the little waiting-maid casting admiring eyes at L.'s six feet two—we passed into the momentary shade of the little avenue of trees and took our way down the long deserted road. The skydsgut had placed himself behind L.'s carriage, who shuddered as he felt the contents of his bag undergoing fresh mangling.

Between Sörum and Otta the way was less striking than it had been. Behind us we obtained a fine view of the Lomsegg, rising majestically to its height of some 9000 feet, its snow-capped summit gleaming in the sunshine. The Otta still kept beside us, frothing and foaming as the valley began to narrow. Here and there we passed an old farm on the hillside that had done duty as a rough and primitive station in days before the new road was made. Now their little glory had departed, and the owners once more found themselves out of the world. Perhaps not sorry to be left in peace; perhaps regretting the little grist travellers had brought to their mill.

As we went on the road grew more monotonous, yet the wooded slopes of the narrow Ottadal had the charm that these pine forests always possess in Norway; scenting the air with that wholesome delicious perfume that has not its equal.

Our road began to descend; more and more the river frothed and foamed, hurrying ever onwards, until at last we passed out of the silence and solitude of the deserted valley and found ourselves at Otta.

It was quite a new world, new in every sense of the word, for some years ago it had no existence. Now it is almost a small town, with a large hotel, and many signs of life and movement. All this is due to the railway, which transforms the face of the country wherever it appears. After our late experiences it seemed like coming back into

a crowd; fortunately it did not last, we soon went back into the repose of the desert.

But for a short time the life and bustle of Otta were a pleasant interregnum. The place is splendidly situated, though very much down in the valley. It is, in fact, a junction of three or four valleys leading their different ways into the world. The scream of the railway whistle startles the air; and a long line of rolling carriages, and the white steam standing out against the hillside—scenes so unfamiliar in Norway—suggest that the age of miracles has returned.

The mountains tower into the clouds. The river flows on its way, broad and beautiful, spanned by bridges in various directions. The village, or little town, looks like a nest of houses reposing in the plain, with trees waving here and there in contrast with the red and grey roofs. Nothing could look more picturesque.

On ordinary days of the week the place is quiet enough, and when the trains are not in evidence, little disturbs the silent air but the murmur of the river.

To-day being Sunday, the world was out on its travels, and the place seemed quite civilised and fashionable. The hotel was spacious. In the large dining-room, in which a couple of hundred people could sit down comfortably, an army of maids were setting out the tables with white cloths and bright silver; others were arranging flowers.

A *châtelaine* came in and asked what she could do for us. She was the mistress of the house. A bunch of keys dangled at her side at the end of a long chain. An agreeable, good-looking woman, small in figure, and dressed in shimmer of silk, in honour of Sunday.

We intimated that we wanted *déjeuner*, but could not wait the general hour. She looked grave.

"The cook has a temper," she said; "and very often the smallest thing will put him out for the day, and he will maliciously spoil everything. I dare not ask him. You will really be better served if you wait."

And to avoid controversy the little *châtelaine* wisely fled.

"This won't do at all," said L. "We can't go on with this starving system. I am a stone lighter than I was last week, and feel the opposite of Lady Jane: 'Soon there'll be none left of me.' Lunch we must and will have, and at once, if I beard the formidable lion in his den for it. I'll threaten to roast him at his own fire. The portier looks a capable man, and spoke capital English. Let us press him into our service."

He was worth his weight in gold, that portier, and when we explained the matter to him, at once took it in hand.

"Sir," he said, looking up at L., "that fine frame was never built on starvation. Leave the matter to me. If I can get you some good wholesome cold meat, and excellent bread and butter, good wine and black coffee to finish up with, you will be content?"

"You were born to be a prime minister," laughed L. "Only I suppose, like most Norwegians, you would be on the Radical side."

The old portier laughed also. "I don't go in much for politics," he said; "but on the whole I suppose I am a Radical. On the other hand I like our good King so much that I would never go against him. But now for the cook—terrible man! But I am more terrible! That amiable Fru Ohlsen hasn't an ounce of courage in her whole body."

In less than ten minutes we were seated at a small table in the dining-room before an excellent cold collation, at which L. stared very earnestly.

"Mountains and streams may be all very well in their way," he observed at last; "but——"



GUDBRANDSDAL.

The remainder of the sentence was so obvious that it was unnecessary to finish it.

Thus fortified, we started once more on our way with renewed energy. It was needed, for the heat was now overpowering. Earth, air, and sky seemed full of golden, glowing, gorgeous sunshine. It flashed upon the windows, it sparkled on the river; the very mountains became mere reflectors of heat.

"You are lucky to find carriages, sirs," said our inestimable portier. "It is the busiest day we have had this year, but I smuggled these away this morning into another shed in case any one special turned up. In spite of this, I fear you will have a very hot journey."

So we departed, not forgetting that we had much to thank the old portier for.

The horses trotted over the wooden bridge, and turning to the right we passed up the valley, between the mountains and the river Laagen. Again we had the road to ourselves. All the crowd of people were going any way but ours: many no doubt taking the train. Things fell out exactly as we wished. It does not always happen so.

We were now travelling through the Gudbrandsdal, which many think one of the finest districts of Norway, just as the Dovrefeld is one of the wildest. There often seemed to be just room enough for the road between the river and the mountains. Again the valley would open out in great and fertile beauty; spots where green grass grew and fruit-trees flourished. Here and there a waterfall ran down the mountain side, white and frothy, losing itself in the river. Close to one of them, we passed the Church of Sel, with its white walls picked out with black, its slender spire, its curious churchyard fence of slate and tombstones of soapstone. To the north we had the great mountain of Formokampen. It is a lovely valley, to which the intense solitude added its charm.

After driving for an hour and a half, we reached the station of Laurgaard. Crossing the wooden bridge over the Laagen, we ascended a short hill. Here the valley expanded into a sort of triangle bounded by the mountains, and a ravine led up into a wild pass and the Høvringen Sæter, where travellers can find accommodation; an intensely solitary, out-of-the-world spot, but one of the loveliest excursions in Norway. The station of Laurgaard was a fairly good one, with large rooms, and in one of them we actually found a capital piano on which to discourse sweet music. The house seemed utterly deserted with the exception of one maiden, and a man in the barn to supply chance travellers with carriages. The spot was so wild and lovely that we should have been glad to put up there; there was a strange charm about the place; but our day's journey was not half over. It is historical too, for near here Sinclair took refuge the night before he fell at Kringelen, whilst the large barn sheltered a great number of the Scots.

Soon after this we entered a wild ravine of the utmost beauty. The valley narrowed, and on reaching a wooden bridge almost spanning the valley, we looked down into the frothing river tumbling and rushing over its rocky bed. Anything wilder could not be conceived, whilst the hillsides were covered with dense stunted shrubs.

Then passing out of the ravine, the scene changed to an Alpine valley, barren and destitute of all vegetation. There were immense stretches of grass, now brown with heat and dryness. On the right rose the broad Rustenfeld with its sweeping undulations, and on the left the great mountain range of the Kjölen.

In this valley, when the summers are cold, snow never quite dis-

appears, and large patches of it lie by the roadside. Occasionally a snow-plough may be seen waiting for the winter.

Next came the station of Brændhaugen, with its small settlement of houses, where the Gudbrandsdal passes into the Dovrefjeld. A few quiet men and women in costume were sitting about, looking very picturesque and very much as though time passed slowly for them on the Sunday, and they longed for Monday morning and the monotonous daily round.

It was an interesting settlement, and wonderfully out of the world. The station itself was by the roadside, a long, low building, surrounded by stretches of brown grass.

Just beyond it, standing on rising ground above the roadway, was the church of Dovre, amidst the broad reaches of undulating land. The church is built on an ancient moraine. Here and there one saw large ancient farms, high up on the hills, and all on the sunny side of the fjeld. The river still ran through the valley. Most conspicuous in the landscape and lying far up the mountain side is what was once the royal farm of Tofte : an immense building for Norway, of dark grey stone.

This Dovrefjeld into which we had now passed is a great tract of mountainous country, including in its area a considerable part of the interior of Norway. Its chief valleys are the Rauga and the Laagen, and through part of the latter we had just been travelling. Some of the mountains rise to a height of 6000 feet, and are especially celebrated for their Alpine flora. Snehætta, the highest point in Norway, lies in the Dovrefjeld, with other mountains which form immense regions of eternal snow.

The Dovre district has a character peculiar to itself. Much of it is wild and barren, with somewhat the aspect of our south downs in England or the wilder downs of Scotland. Broad, sweeping undulations meet one on every side, and as the eye follows them far and near one gains a feeling of boundless space, of eternal loneliness and solitude. Many of the sharp mountain peaks are inaccessible. To the south of this enormous tract lies the great Jostedals glacier, the largest in Europe, with an area of 500 square miles. Much might be written about the Dovres if space permitted, for they embrace all the country from the Gudbrandsdalen to the Orkedalen ; all the high mountainous region bounded on the east by the valleys of the Tønna and Orkla, again falling away to the Sognefjord and stretching westward to the Romsdal, that valley with its marvellous scenery, its inaccessible peaks, mountain torrents, and wealth of forest slopes.

The country through which we now journeyed was broad and bare and barren. The eye almost tired of following the undulations which ran up into huge hills clear cut against the sky. It all looked very lonely and deserted, and the only people we met on the road were one or two young men with knapsacks, who were evidently tramping through the country on their way, perhaps, to emigrate to some far-off land in search of fame or fortune.

So the way went on for a time until we reached our last stage but one, Toftemoen, the flashing river keeping us constant company.

All through this part of the valley we had seen the small solitary farms high up on the east slopes of the hills. Vast pine forests stretched far out of sight.

The Gudbrandsdal is said to end at Brændhaugen, but in reality ends at Toftemoen, where the Dovrefield begins.

A long, low, solitary house, this station, with an ancient pedigree. Tofte, the landlord, was seated on a bench outside his door, his dog lying at his feet. Tofte is himself an historical personage, claiming descent from Harald Haarfager. Hanging up on the wall of the sitting-room was his genealogical tree, clearly proving the justice of his pretensions. It is said that when the King of Sweden and Norway passed through Toftemoen he was obliged to admit Tofte to his table in honour of his royal lineage.

We found him a pale, delicate-looking man, mild and gentle to a degree, and anxious to do all he could to oblige, and apparently incapable of any self-assertion. He possesses a large gaard, or farm, on the hill opposite the station, and on a panel above the door of one of the rooms is a representation of the March of the Scottish Expedition.

The station was certainly one of the nicest and cleanest we had seen; and we had now been travelling so long and so far without food that we felt it time to break our fast.

The only young woman in waiting, dressed in costume and looking very picturesque, manifested extreme unwillingness to prepare anything, and Tofte had to exercise his gentle authority in the matter. She finally yielded with a bad grace to which we were wisely oblivious. Before we left, seeing that our desires were moderate, she had quite recovered her amiability.

Two ladies were stopping at the station, a mother and daughter, who seemed much entertained by our interest in the genealogical tree. It had been our fate during the last twenty-four hours to encounter ladies travelling in couples. They also proved to be Swedes, and were dressed in flounces and furbelows—fashionable costumes that looked almost incongruous in this out-of-the-world spot. An open piano was in the room, with some good classical music on the stand. The ladies were evidently sojourning at the station, not merely passing through. We were waiting for our repast to be announced.

"You must find this a very dull and desolate spot," said L., politely addressing the elder lady. Unlike most Englishmen, he never loses a chance of conversation, shrewdly maintaining that you never know what fields of wisdom it may open out.

"Desolate it certainly is," replied the lady in excellent English, "but that is our very reason for being here. We arrived on Friday, and were so charmed with the loneliness and repose of the place that we determined to remain here a week. The station itself is excellent,

and Tofte—whose ancient pedigree hangs on the wall,” laughed the lady —“does all in his power to make us comfortable. Dull we are not. People have no right to be dull, unless they are themselves stupid.”

“I agree with you,” said L., “but the majority of the world would be against you.”

“Because the majority of the world is empty-headed,” laughed the lady. “Your own philosopher, Carlyle, has said as much in plainer language. We have our books, and there is an excellent piano, and the scenery is of a kind that especially appeals to me; and finally, we have the place to ourselves.”

At this moment a travelling carriage dashed up to the door, with all the noise and clatter dear to the heart of post-boys. The ladies went to the window.

“Prince S.!” exclaimed the elder lady. “We know his people quite well, but not himself. He is a German, and a great friend of that very remarkable man, the German Emperor. Surely he will not stay here and spoil our solitude?”

It was soon evident that the German Prince S. intended nothing of the sort. He did not even descend from his carriage, but had some light refreshment brought out to him in the shape of beer, administered by the royal hands of Tofte himself. The prince of course had no pretensions to royal blood. He was a tall, stout man, with a florid complexion and red hair, and a moustache of which the corners pointed fiercely to the eyes. With it all he looked simple and good-tempered.

The whole incident was over in a few minutes. The prince dashed off again with a polite bow to Herr Tofte; the ladies once more breathed freely. They might still enjoy uninterrupted solitude. Our repast was now announced as ready in the next room.

“I see Beethoven’s Moonlight Sonata open on the piano,” said L. to the younger lady. “If you would only play it whilst we are taking our refreshment, you would give me a remembrance to carry away with me that I should not easily forget.”

“Are you fond of music?” asked the young lady, apparently not in the least offended by L.’s bold request.

“Passionately,” he returned.

“Do you sing?”

“Like a nightingale.”

“A somewhat large nightingale,” laughed the young lady. “What a pity you are not staying. We might sing duetts together.”

“But what about your solitude?”

“Oh, well,” blushing and laughing, and looking first at L. and then at her mother out of a pair of large and lovely brown eyes scarcely to be equalled: “I am not *quite* so fond of solitude as mamma. And it is so difficult to find any one who sings well. Is your voice a baritone?”

“Yes, inclining to bass,” said L.

“And mine is a high soprano. What charming duetts we could

sing together—I must say it again. And you go on in half-an-hour Why is life so contrary?"

L. gave a very becoming sigh, looked as regretful as any young lady could wish, and half suggested that we should put up at Toftemoen for a day or two. We might have done so, but for the impossibility of changing the plan marked out for us.

A second time the maid announced that we were served, with an expression plainly intimating that since she had had the trouble of getting it ready, thus disturbing her quiet Sunday afternoon, we might as well take it before it grew cold.

We left the door open, and the young lady sat down to the piano and went through the Moonlight as we had seldom heard it played: with all the execution and all the taste of a finished performer, besides throwing into it much of her own individuality. L. put down his knife and fork, and lost himself in a dream of harmony. The playing had bewitched him. Then when it was over—every bar of it from beginning to end—the player suddenly broke into that very graceful and dramatic song by Gregh, "*Parais à ta fenêtre*," and the singing proved not less beautiful than the playing.

"La nature est endormie,
Le zéphir caresse l'eau,
Me répondras-tu, ma Mie,
Ouvriras-tu ton rideau?
Au ciel bleu la lune brille
Comme un grand disque argenté,
Le rossignol fait son trille,
Et chante sa liberté.
Ah! Parais à ta fenêtre
Qu'un doux regard de tes beaux yeux
En mon âme pénètre,
Et m'entr'ouvre les cieux!"

The singer's voice was exquisite, and through all three verses, and through the refrain of each, the notes rang out clear as a bell, flexible as a lark, almost causing her enraptured hearers themselves to soar heavenwards.

We were both enchanted, and wished the hours would linger. Then there was silence and the spell was broken, and we went back to the sitting-room to thank the ladies and wish them good-bye.

"Alas, that we must go," said L., in melancholy tones that were not at all forced. "I feel like the Peri for whom the gates of Eden were opened for a moment, then closed for ever, leaving him in darkness and night."

"You are evidently devoted to music," said the elder lady, whilst the younger looked at L. with those wonderful eyes as though to ask him whether they as well as the music had any power to attract. "You are devoted to music. For once I will break through conventional rules and give you my card. It is not usual," she laughed, "without an introduction, but I see that I am not making a mistake.

If ever you come to Stockholm, come and see us, and I will promise you such music as you seldom hear. In truth we both live for it, and all the best amateurs in the Swedish capital are to be found at my receptions. We are always at home through the winter."

So we exchanged cards and promised ourselves that we would pay Stockholm a winter visit; then very reluctantly took leave of these charming ladies. The carriages were ready, and it was time to start if we would reach Dombaas before dark. We had lingered long at Toftemoen. Herr Tofte carefully saw us off, and his dog barked; whether a bark of relief or regret we could not make out. The two ladies were at the window, and with a polite bow to them we finally went off. It had been a delicious interval in our day's journey.

"Baroness Kantlow," said L., examining the card as he went along. "Shall we ever renew the acquaintance in Stockholm? What an unspeakable calamity we could not spend a day or two with them at Toftemoen. Miss Kantlow is one of the loveliest girls I ever saw. Did you ever imagine such eyes?"

The next stage was a difficult one and occupied nearly two hours. Our way for a short time now lay through green pastures between which the Laagen took its silvery course. Then we gradually ascended until the valley grew wild and narrow, and we looked down into a deep rugged ravine at the bottom of which, far down, the Laagen still rushed on its way. The sun was fast descending. It had been the hottest day known for forty years, and as we ascended, the air, cooler and stronger, grew inexpressibly grateful. Vegetation began to disappear, the trees were more stunted, and after a certain height the upland was wild and bare.

At last, at a height of over 2000 feet, we reached the summit of our climb, and found ourselves at Dombaas, our quarters for the night.

We seemed in a new world, another atmosphere. It was life and strength after the enervating heat of the past day. Here people come and spend days and weeks for the sake of the air, and lay up health for the toils of another year.

It was quite a large settlement: a series of cheerful wooden houses, built one after the other, as necessity dictated. A most obliging serving-woman came out and gave us admirable rooms, opening on to a third, in which she promised she would put no one, that we might make sure of quiet and repose.

We were on the summit of the hill, and the free air of heaven could blow upon us from all quarters. The sun had gone down and twilight was fast descending. A scene strangely wild, strangely out of the world, but exhilarating to the last degree from the lightness and freshness and purity of the atmosphere.

"It was worth while coming," said L., taking in a deep deep draught of the pure oxygen; "almost worth giving up a day or two's stay in Toftemoen, and all the music, and Miss Kantlow's lovely eyes and

charming manners. What a musical voice she had in speaking as well as singing—a rare combination! What is your opinion?"

"Whatever is, is best," I replied. "It is always wise to think so, whether it be so or not. But human nature is so constituted that we almost always regret the alternative we did *not* take."

"In other words," said L., "distance lends enchantment to the view. The possession of an object robs it of half its charm. Nothing, however, could lessen the charm of Miss Kantlow. Ever since we left I have been trying to conjure up my faculty of second-sight, with a view to ascertaining whether we are destined ever to meet again."

"Well?"

"Not well at all," he returned. "It will not come at my bidding—it never does. Just when I think the magic mist is rising, and I shall see the future pass before me, lo, the vision clears, and there is nothing to be told."

"You must live on the pleasures of hope," I returned philosophically—it is so easy to be wise for others. "Perhaps to-morrow the vision will come when you least expect it, and it will tell you that we are to spend next winter in Stockholm, where you will live in a sort of paradise, singing duetts with Miss Kantlow, and feasting on perpetual melody."

"And pass in music out of sight," laughed L. "I really think she would make a charming wife."

And I felt then that if our winter in Stockholm came to pass, it would seal L.'s fate for weal or woe.

"Perhaps the whole thing will come to me in dreams to-night," he said. "In the meantime let us explore this inimitable spot, and drink in more of this glorious, life-giving oxygen."

And turning to the left we went up into the high-road to Trondhjem, with a forest of stunted firs on either side, dark and mysterious, silent and solitary. In the sky above us the evening star, pale and liquid, hung trembling.

COLLAR AND CUFFS: A DOG'S STORY

By K. F. PURDON

YOU have often asked me, my dear pups, how I came by the bright silver collar I wear. It is a question I have many times put to myself in vain. I remember, of course, perfectly the circumstances connected with it; but why did they lead up to such an appendage?

I really don't know. I had done nothing unusual that day. To be sure I had had a rather good time of it, but that, as you know, generally leads to a few cuffs later on; and why, I know as little as why on this occasion I was given a silver collar. By the way—I've grown used to it now—but how I did loathe it for many a long day! how often it has almost strangled me squeezing through a hedge! how many a fleeing rabbit it has saved!

However, pride feels no pain, and anyway I can't slip it off. It's as bad as a snare; and when you get caught in one of them—well, you'd better make your will and settle your affairs, unless you have a fairly sensible dog with you, who will manage to gnaw you free, as Flo once did—but this is a digression.

Collars and Cuffs! and did you really think I meant things to wear, such as our master (so-called) fetters himself with? Not me! although there are dogs, a good way off to be sure, in a place they call Gay Parree, who wear clothes! overcoats! silk night-shirts! and handkerchiefs! Faugh!

Where did I hear that? Why, where I hear most such useless chatter, lying under the dining-table, to be sure, my nose on my paws, in a circle of boots and shoes, big and little. A very snug place it is, too, except that now and then you come in for an accidental kick.

Under those circumstances I never squeal. To do so draws attention to your position, and means "Confound that dog! Put him out!" and two good hours before real bedtime perhaps. If you say nothing you have a fair chance of being forgotten, and of sleeping all night in very good quarters. For a Turkey carpet is certainly better than shavings or straw.

On the same principle I often now decline my master's invitation to lie on the rug of an evening while he has his smoke.

At his "Come over, old fellow!" I get up very stiffly and slowly walk to his side, and lay my nose gently on his knee, wagging my tail all the time. I stand for a minute or two with drooped ears, gazing into the fire, while he fondles me softly with his strong, gentle fingers, and then I modestly withdraw under the table again.

I think he knows why! At any moment we may hear a soft swish-swish along the hall; the door may open, and some one may say, "When *are* you coming?" Then if I am in sight, "Why on earth wasn't that dog put out!" I have to go then, and my reluctant exit is often hastened by a sharp-heeled little shoe. And that is why it pays a dog best to lie low—in the house at least. Some dogs, I am well aware, consider any notice is better than none. I don't.

As for barking indoors—well, I used to do it. If I heard a noise I didn't recognise, I would try to draw my master's attention to it. To be sure, he is very slow about understanding me, though I often can guess what he is thinking about; but, even if he doesn't catch on, he might give me credit for not speaking without reason.

Never shall I forget one evening in the good old times. There was no lamp lit, and he was sitting at the window, I lying at his feet, bored and yawning for very weariness. He did look foolish! he had a faded rose in his hand, and he was kissing it, and saying, "O Ellie," and then he would look up at the moon. I often howl myself at such a time, but that is for loneliness, and all the other dogs far and near join in. I've nothing against a dog making a noise on such an occasion, but that's out of doors.

Well, just as he was saying "O Ellie" for perhaps the seventeenth time, I gave a short, quick, yelping bark. It was getting on my nerves; besides, I heard a sound I knew well. But his ears are not so quick as mine, and why did I get such cuffs and kicks because he couldn't understand what I wanted to say? He hadn't even the grace to apologise when next morning he found what had happened. The sheep had forced their way through the garden hedge, and no one knew it till next morning. Well, I had done my best, and why am I abused now for being a bad watch? Bless you, I hear as well as ever I did, but why should I give notice of every sound, and thus earn a kick, or, what hurts me nearly as much, a "Lie down, you fool!" Fool, indeed! Well, maybe I am, but I've more sense than to bark now—indoors at least.

Outside it's another story. There I squeal *before* I'm hurt; it's only putting your pride in your pocket. Of course, one's feeling is in favour of dignified silence; but in such cases it doesn't pay.

Humans have actually found this out, or something like it.

"Oh dear, what a time I did have with that dentist to-day!" sighed Ellie, only last week. "What brutes they are!" (Brutes indeed, and why, pray?) "I kept wondering, do dentists really go to heaven?"

"What matter if they don't set up in practice there?" says my master, and they laughed, and he goes on: "Poor little girl! but if you have to go again you just take my tip. Sigh and groan whenever it hurts. Follow Lord Salisbury's advice to the Irish landlords, and kick up a fuss if you don't want to get left, and——"

"Oh don't, for pity's sake, begin on politics!" says Ellie; "pick

me a really good rose there, up high. How sweet the pinks are at this hour. Oh, is that a bat?"

It was just growing dusk, and certainly, as humans go, she was very nice in her soft white dress. Her hair is just the colour of "Grouse," the red setter, for I remember comparing them one day that she kissed his head—that was just after the gipsy tea; but, dear me! I have to go back to that still.

Well, she did, of course, look nice; but how he could stop on in that wretched garden, to stick pink roses in her hair, just when the rabbits would be coming out to play! I walked up and down behind them as long as I could stand it, hoping, too, that he would notice me, and run in for the gun as he used to do in the old times. But at last I just got disgusted, and slipped off, and your mother and I—well, we put up a record that same evening.

Many and many a hunt like that have I enjoyed—many and many a cuff and kick have I got, to "break me off poaching," as they call it. But it's worth it! To start off early, early, of a summer morning, when the sun is just sending long shadows over the grass, white with dew—no one astir—the very cattle only beginning to stand up to their daily occupation of munching the sweet flowery herbage, a solitary bird here and there uttering a sleepy twitter: away you canter with two or three trusty, well-trained companions.

Poor Flo, a kind of cousin of my own, was the best I ever had. I shall never meet her match for bolting a rabbit out of furze, and her patience, her courage! As long as I had her I need never "hoke" myself; she did all the digging out. When it came to the killing she stepped aside—and, of course, I always gave her what I couldn't eat myself.

She deserved a better fate.

A large party was staying here—it was in the old man's time, my master's uncle. Ellie and her mother were here, and there was a tall, thin fellow, a cousin of my master's—Alfred, his confounded name was. I heard under the dining-table that he was at the Bar—though indeed I never saw him drink much—and that some day he'd be on the woolsack—perhaps a punishment—I hope a bad one! He could give a worse kick with his thin shiny shoes than ever my master did with his shooting-boots.

Well, if this fellow didn't meet poor Flo and me coming home one morning before we'd had time to rub off the mud and stuff. He had his gun; he looked round. There was no one in sight. I made a bolt for it to a lot of last year's long grass on the breast of a ditch. It's just my colour, and he didn't see me.

But I heard a shot and then a dreadful yelp, and I guessed what had happened. Poor Flo!

I lay there just quaking and heard him say, "That'll stop some of the poaching anyway!" and he went on towards the burrow; for he wanted to kill a rabbit himself, but he couldn't, the ass! My master

came out after him, and he was cursing till all was blue about the game being neglected, and he'd shoot every stray dog or cat he saw.

"I think you'd better not!" says my master very quietly.

"The place isn't yours yet," says the other.

"No, nor I hope won't change hands for many a long day," was the reply.

Just then he saw poor little Flo.

"What is this? You've never shot Flo!"

"I have, and what of that?"

"She's Uncle Tom's, that's all," says my master.

"Oh, I didn't know that! Er—er—I—you'll not mention this."

My master said nothing, but he called to Jack Flanagan, who was passing with his spade, to come to dig a hole, and he laid Flo in it, and covered her over himself.

I am sure he never did tell Uncle Tom, but somehow the poor old man used to know everything, though he could only go about in a bath-chair. And I think Flanagan told him about Flo—he thought nearly as much of her as I did myself; many a rabbit we helped him to for his Sunday dinner.

"Bad cess to that Dublin jackeen," quoth Flanagan, "he'd begridge a body the very mud on their brogues. Why wouldn't I tell th' ould masther, whin I was axed—and faith I'm thinkin' that shot at poor Flo has fired him out o' this!"

Indeed, no one liked cousin Alfred, and I often wondered why Ellie let him talk to her, by the hour together, too. My master then always stepped aside, like poor Flo with the rabs.

Cuffs and collars! I heard enough about them the day of the gipsy tea. Mary, the laundry-maid, was in tears. "Masther Gerald was never that contrhary before about his linen," she said. Cousin Alfred's was as smooth and shiny as ice. My master was downright cross as he dressed, for I was lying under the bed and heard him. How I longed to help him! but I could only whine and beat the floor with my tail, till he said, "Shut up, you brute!" and shied a boot at me.

He was late down, and had to drive Ellie's mother. The Dublin cousin had secured the young lady, and the two were just disappearing through the laurels at the gate as we came out.

But my master made the best of it, and the old lady beamed kindly at him as they drove off in his high trap.

The house was very lonely when they left; no one but the poor old man being wheeled up and down in the sun, and I couldn't bear to look at him. I always expected to see Flo cuddled up at his feet. It put me into low spirits to see him without her.

So I bethought me of a rabbit burrow some miles off, that I had been reserving, and made off there.

But to my great annoyance I found I might as well have stopped at home. If it wasn't on a hill close by those absurd humans had chosen to have their ridiculous gipsy tea! and every rab. in the place was lying

in the burrow half-scared to death. The party was sitting about on rugs and carriage-cushions in various attitudes of discomfort, drinking tea and eating cake; Ellie and the Dublin cousin a good bit away, talking very earnestly, and my master, looking as happy as a hen on a hot griddle, balancing the kettle over the fire. His face was very red and hot. When he saw me: "What are you doing here? Go home out of that, you sweep!" and he dropped the kettle to send a stick whizzing at me. Of course, I dodged it, but I gave an appropriate yelp all the same, as I retreated towards Ellie, for she was the only one who didn't laugh. She tried to whistle, and called out, "Isn't that Rags? Poor Rags! come over here!" and she spread out her skirt for me to lie down. "Love me, love my dog!" said cousin Alfred, who was looking white and angry, and as he said this—well, if he'd been a dog he'd have snapped at you next moment.

"Ah! this is too much!" I heard Ellie whisper to herself, and she got up and went over beside her mother.

"D—n you! I wish I'd shot you, too!" said cousin Alfred, aiming a savage kick at me as he turned away. It scarcely touched me, but I revenged myself by producing a howl of such anguish that every one looked round indignantly, and my master even made a step or two towards us as if to protect me. And here again note the inconsistency of humans. The master who hammers you till he leaves you for dead, for some trifling error of judgment, such as a young setter running up his birds—well, the same master will wax simply furious if any one else dares lay a finger on you.

I now thought it safer to retire. The scraps that are going at that style of entertainment are not worth running any risks for.

So I crept off towards the traps, drawn up under some trees. The horses were snatching at the short sweet grass, every now and then throwing up their heads to get rid of the heavy collars that kept slipping down. Dear me! horses have their share to put up with, too! The men were having some tea—my master had not forgotten them—and they were too busy to notice me. So I got up into our own trap, slipped under a rug lying on the back seat, and fell asleep.

I was wakened by voices close by my hiding-place. It was Ellie and her mother, and the latter was saying in a whisper, "What a fuss about nothing! You can't refuse to drive back with Gerald, after coming here with the other; and you've no choice now—here he is. Yes, Mr. Gerald, if you'll take Ellie I shall be glad not to have to climb into that very high trap again. Dear Mrs. Munro has offered to take me in her phaeton —" and off she went.

My master helped Ellie to her perch—his hands trembled a good deal as he did so—and took the reins to drive off. I was sure he would find me; but he seemed to be thinking of something else, and I lay very still, as still as I could, that is, for my position was very insecure.

And here, again, the inconsistency of humans! These two must have liked each other. The merest puppy could have seen that. Yet

now that they were together and alone, driving through the warm dusk of a July evening, between hedges that were simply puffing perfume at them from the wild roses and honeysuckle and stuff—why, they sat stiff and mum, in the kind of silence that is called “dogged”—I don’t know why!—Ellie, with her eyes between the horse’s ears, as if she was driving, and my master holding the reins just anyhow.

To do him justice, he made several efforts. He was always seeing things at his side of the road. Did she notice that oak? or how late the cattle were feeding? and how well that old castle looked in the moonlight? And each time he spoke like this, Miss Ellie would turn her fine little head his way to look, and my master would give a little relieved sigh, as if some one had thrown him a bone; and I would wriggle a little in sympathy, and then Miss Ellie would draw herself up and look straight ahead again.

At last he said: “Look! the rabbits are out on the hill there! Do you see those little, twinkling, white spots?”

“Ah, where?” cried Ellie. “Oh yes! Why, the ground is simply alive with them!” and she seemed as much interested as one could reasonably expect from any one who hasn’t actually caught a rabbit herself.

Now, I hadn’t cared about oaks, or cattle, or old moonlit castles, but this was too much for any dog’s self-control. I knew it was a risk, but I very cautiously raised myself to peep out from under the rug. In doing so, I remember distinctly steadying myself against Ellie’s trim little belt.

Well, the effect of that touch! It was like tipping a snail’s horns, or showing yourself too soon at the mouth of a hole into which a rabbit has bolted. Of course, the cowardly creature won’t move.

Ellie kept edging away, edging away—simply frozen into silence; and I kept moving after her; I had to—I had lost my balance, and it was a relief to feel something steady. It was so provoking! Of course the horse was moving, and we were getting past the rabbit-burrow, and do what I would, I couldn’t get my head out; and at last Ellie half-stood up in the trap, and my master said, “Take care! What’s the matter?”

“The matter!” she said, her voice trembling; “I couldn’t have believed you would——”

“Would what?” said my master; and just then I got my head from under the rug.

My master was looking at Ellie with such a confused, unhappy air, as if he had been kicked for venturing to take one of the bones aforesaid, instead of waiting till it was thrown to him; or rather, as I concluded on subsequent reflection, as if he had been kicked on suspicion and hadn’t even had any fun—and that happens with us dogs often enough; as you will learn by-and-by.

But then he caught sight of me—and really, the way the man’s face changed! one minute so abject and puzzled, the next so masterful.

"What are you doing here? Get out, you brute!" he said.

"What!" said Ellie, "was that Rags behind me on the seat all the time? Why, I thought——" And really the change in my master's voice was nothing to the change in hers—only it was the other way about. And will you tell me why the sight of me made him angry, while it seemed a relief to her? The inconsistency of humans!

"Thought what?" said my master.

"Oh, never mind; only don't put him out, please!" said Ellie, with a little laugh, and a catch in her breath. "See, I'll take him beside me."

Well, by that time we were out of sight of the rabs.—there was nothing more to look at. So I let her settle me on her lap—it was very uncomfortable for both of us, but then I wasn't in a position to dictate. And as they began talking very soon in low tones, she forgot me, and I made myself comfortable my own way, and soon fell asleep. When we got home, I jumped down to be out of the way. He lifted Ellie out—very slowly too, and I heard him say, "Mayn't I speak to your mother to-morrow?" and she ran in, and then he noticed me.

"Why, Rags!" he said—and he petted me—"you were there too, but wise as you are, you don't know this minute why she changed like that;" which certainly was true. "You did me a good turn, showing up just at a critical moment, and letting her see that it was you and not my arm she felt behind her. How angry she was, Rags! but I like her none the less!"

He said all that, and a lot more, as we walked up and down in the moonlight, smoking—at least, he was smoking. I needn't tell you I never disgraced myself by learning to hold a pipe between my teeth, as some wretched irritable brutes have to do. But with all he said, I couldn't understand why she seemed better satisfied to have me behind her than my master's arm. I suppose it's more of the inconsistency. Seemed, I say—it's all a puzzle—and so is this collar, which came by post a few days after Ellie and her mother had left, addressed

"— RAGS, Esquire."

On a scrap of paper, inside the neat parcel, was written, "In memory of our gipsy tea," and I've worn the collar ever since.

THE VIGIL

A LEGEND OF PEKIN

I

LOUD through the land from east to west
Red battle surged ; from north to south
The demon of a world's unrest
Blazed in the angry cannon's mouth.

And growing fury, creeping fire
Sprang from the outer darkness deep,
Unchecked, to hurl a people's ire
On distant nations lost in sleep.

Soundly they slept ! They could not hear
Low from our lips that hopeful call,
That prayer for life, which knows not fear
Yet asks that death may not befall,

For life is sweet, and men must take
Into their hearts, wife, child, and friend.
But sound they slept, and only wake
Knowing the strange and dreadful end.

But God gave strength : and morn by morn
Faithful His luminary rose
To give, with every hour new-born,
A light unseen of friends and foes.

We looked the future in the face,
And dared its issue : it was kind.
The body loses form and grace,
Remains the beauty of the mind.

Remains the inward health and light,
Force of the brain, strength of the will,
Remains the heart's supernal sight,
Remains the soul's own splendour still.

We said farewell to life and love,
We said farewell to hope and youth,
We glanced below, we gazed above,
And so we faced the tragic truth.

Fears in our danger rose, but fell :
At first the children held their breath,
But soon they heard, and it was well,
As of a friend, the name of Death.

And so to arms, while east and west
Red battle surged, and north and south
The demon of a world's unrest
Blazed in the fiery cannon's mouth.

II

Each to his task : each to his post :
We took our orders, none rebelled ;
We shared with those who loved it most
The honour of the name we held.

And all was ready, come the dread
Deliverance as it might and must.
Our chief looked noble as he said :—
"Do but your duty, God is just."

Each to his post. Increased the strain,
The days were one hard labour long,
But still we found our wits again,
And sometimes laughter rose to song.

A cheerful band, together knit,
Old friends, and only one away,
And he ? The good God answer it !
Alone. He could not disobey.

And yet how grand his fatal lot,
A mortal shielding the divine,
For though he fall, he suffers not
Who guards till death a sacred shrine.

We left him when the hour was late
(One only could be spared to rest
Within the sanctuary gate
Before the emblems of the blest).

His face was calm, his eyes were bright;
With cheerful voice he said "Good-bye,"
And pointed to the single light
That hung before the altar high.

He spoke—we answered with a smile—
"You die together: I alone.
The future? 'Tis a little while
And we shall meet before the Throne."

And in his glance there shone the trust
Of those whose work is yet to do.
The scoffer's scorn lay deep in dust,
For they who wondered found him true.

Forth to our fearful toil we went
Through empty court and vacant room,
And there, his courage still unspent,
We left him kneeling in the gloom.

III

The days, the very hours were long;
And twenty times he heard the clock
Above him chime for evensong.
Twice every day he turned the lock

Seeking the cloister. There the store
Was scanty. Little was his need;
He would not give the body more,
It was his soul he willed to feed.

And all the while from east to west,
With distant thunder, north and south,
The demon of a world's unrest
Blazed in the furious cannon's mouth.

One night he turned at the quick sound
Of footsteps, while the angry storm
Seemed nearer. On the holy ground
There stooped to him a sombre form.

A friend! A parchment-yellow face,
But still a friend, who spoke with haste:
"The time is short, but I can trace,
Master, a path across the waste

"Where all lie dead. The time is short!"
The priest but blessed him by his name:—
"In days of good and ill report
You helped me. Christ would do the same."

"But look," he said, "there, overhead,
Light fails. Our foes I fain would foil."
With magic feet his servant sped
And brought him back a cruse of oil.

Blest service! Once again the glow
Shone brightly as it shone of old;
With thanks he made his servant go:
"We meet," he said, "when all's unrolled."

"Dead!" And the merry music stilled
Of children; the perfected zeal
Of men and women, proudly filled
With love for this strange people's weal,

Gone! And he shrank a moment, blind
With horror: then to lift his eyes
And see, past every fate unkind,
A sign of perfect peace arise.

IV

Night fell. Once more the solemn hour
Of vigil through increasing pain,
Alone, whilst in the quiet tower
Chimed the sweet bell again, again,

To daylight, with an aching heart
He watched and waited for release.
The slightest whisper made him start:
He prayed with pallid lips for peace.

Peace, but to keep that altar light
Steadily burning till he died.
And after? God maintains the right;
The rest He will at last provide.

"My happiest duty's all but done,
I fear no sword's benignant edge,
But fear, ere yet my race be run,
The last most dreadful sacrilege."

He spoke with utterance faint and weak,
Hunger had long begun to gnaw,
But still he prayed, intent to seek
Mercy for those without the law.

Then the light flickered, and his strength
Grew with the moments less and less.
But prayers are heard. Loud, loud at length
He heard the rabble shriek and press.

He rose to meet them, threw the door
Wide open; came full strength anew.
Then at one blow the holy floor
Was quickly stained a crimson hue.

But ere he fell one glance he flung
Backward, to lift a cry of praise,
For there before the altar hung
No flickering light. A mighty blaze,

A golden splendour, seen of men
Who hold the faith when all is gone.
He saw, and died. And only then
The blind unreasoning crowd swept on.

O crowning mercy, vigil blest,
Hiding from those imperfect eyes
The triumph of that strange unrest!
For we, from vantage of the skies,

See with an undiminished faith
The light, extinguished for an hour,
Pass from the dim abodes of death
To radiance of a higher power—

While through the land from east to west
Dark fury rules, and north and south
Blind anger, with a demon's zest,
Is blazing in the cannon's mouth—

See fresh revealed, through weal and woe,
That ancient promise, made of yore,
As light athwart the darkness: "Go,
For I am with you evermore."

HERBERT MORRAH.

OXFORD AND HER COLLEGES

VII. CHRIST CHURCH

BY REV. CLAUDE M. BLAGDEN

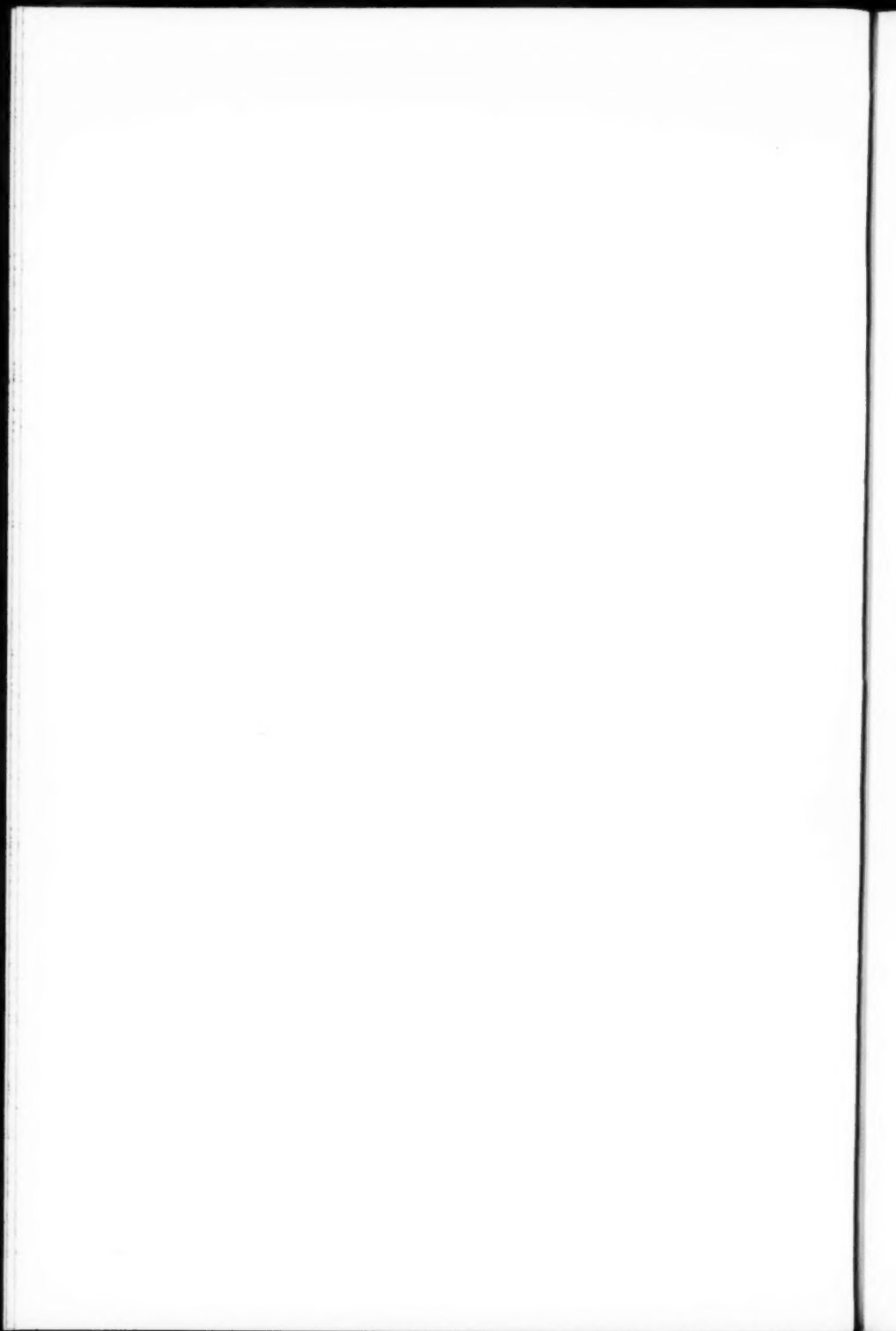
TO write a short article on the subject of a great institution can never be an easy matter, and any one may be pardoned for shrinking from the task ; but the difficulty is increased a hundred-fold when the institution itself is marked off from others of apparently kindred nature by many curious features. This is emphatically the case with Christ Church. It is a College, and, as such, has many points of agreement with other colleges, but you must not talk of "Christ Church College," or you will repent it if you do. It is much more than a college. It contains within it the Cathedral of the Diocese, and a Dean and Chapter : its Governing Body is constituted in a way that distinguishes it from all other Governing Bodies in Oxford. Add to this the fact that its master is the Dean, its disciplinary officers are called Censors, its fellows Students, and you have in a small compass all the points which confuse the intelligent tourist, when he first enters the Great Quadrange with a Baedeker in his hand and a local guide at his elbow. How is it that the Cathedral Church is also the College Chapel ? How is it that five of the Canons are also Professors ? What is the connection between the College and the Chapter now ? These are questions which require an answer, and can only be answered by reference to ancient history.

At the beginning of the reign of Henry VIII., the site now occupied by the Cathedral, the Cloisters, the Chapter House, and the lodgings of the Margaret Professor of Divinity, held the Priory of St. Frideswide, which at that time belonged to the Canons Regular of the Augustinian Order. In 1524-1525 Cardinal Wolsey obtained bulls from Pope Clement VII. authorising the suppression of "certain religious societies, for the purpose of founding a new institution, a house of learning and piety on collegiate and not on monastic lines." Among these houses was the Priory of St. Frideswide. It was not a rich corporation : in fact, quite recently, it had been enabled to restore its own cloisters only through the liberality of Robert Sherborn, Dean of St. Paul's.¹ But, if it provided little revenue, it gave a splendid site, and here Wolsey decided, and obtained the king's leave, to build. His foundation was to

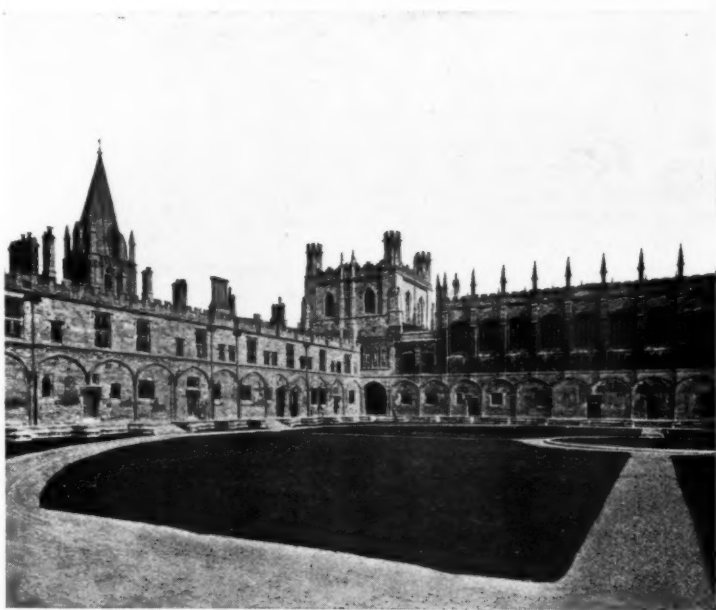
¹ The writer wishes to express his great obligation to the "History of Christ Church," by the Rev. H. L. Thompson (F. S. Robinson & Co.), without which this article could never have been written.



CHRIST CHURCH : THE HALL STAIRCASE



be called "Cardinal College."¹ It was endowed with revenues amounting to £2000 a year. It was to consist of a Dean and sixty Canons *primi ordinis*, the latter including a Sub-dean and four Censors, who were to maintain discipline over the Canons : these would answer to the Governing Body of a college in our own day. Besides these there were to be forty Canons *secundi ordinis* (the Scholars), thirteen Chaplains, twelve Lay Clerks, sixteen Choristers, a Music Master, six Public Professors, four Legal functionaries, and twenty-three servants — 176 in all. The whole scheme was planned on the grandest scale, and the



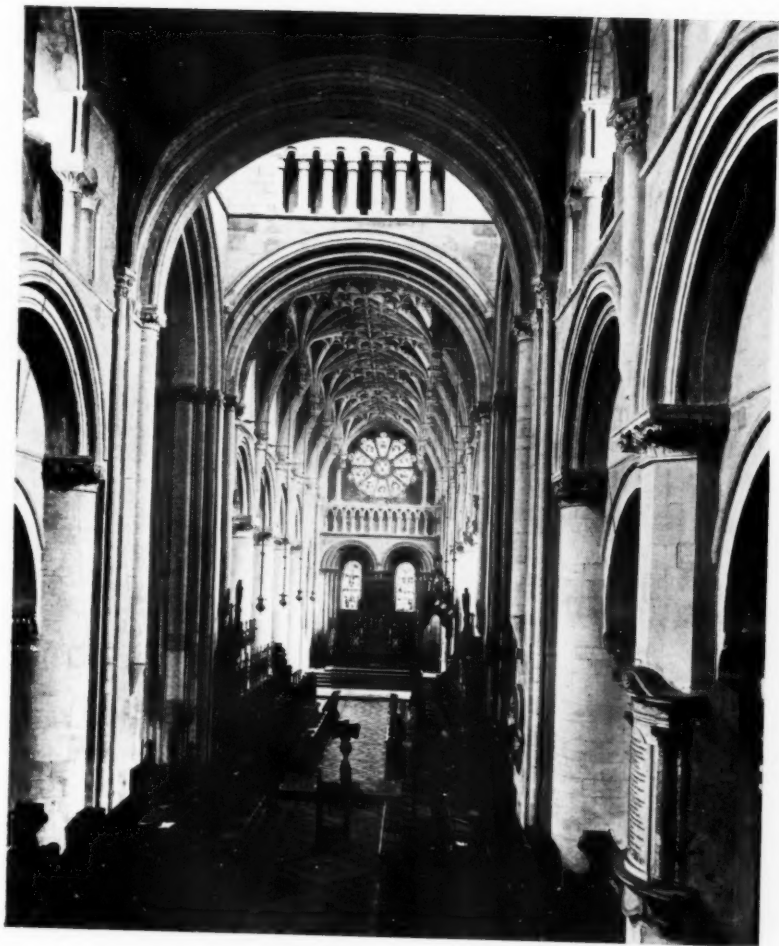
CHRIST CHURCH : THE GREAT QUADRANGLE.

building was begun at once. But, unfortunately, Wolsey did not live to finish it. Henry had long been jealous of him, and, as we now know, his jealousy had not been diminished by the splendour of the Cardinal's new college, or the aggressive pomp with which he had stamped his arms upon its walls. Availing himself of the shallowest pretext, he deprived him of his great seal, ordered him into retirement, and procured a judgment of forfeiture of goods against him in the Court of King's Bench. All this was in 1529. With the other goods belonging to Wolsey, went

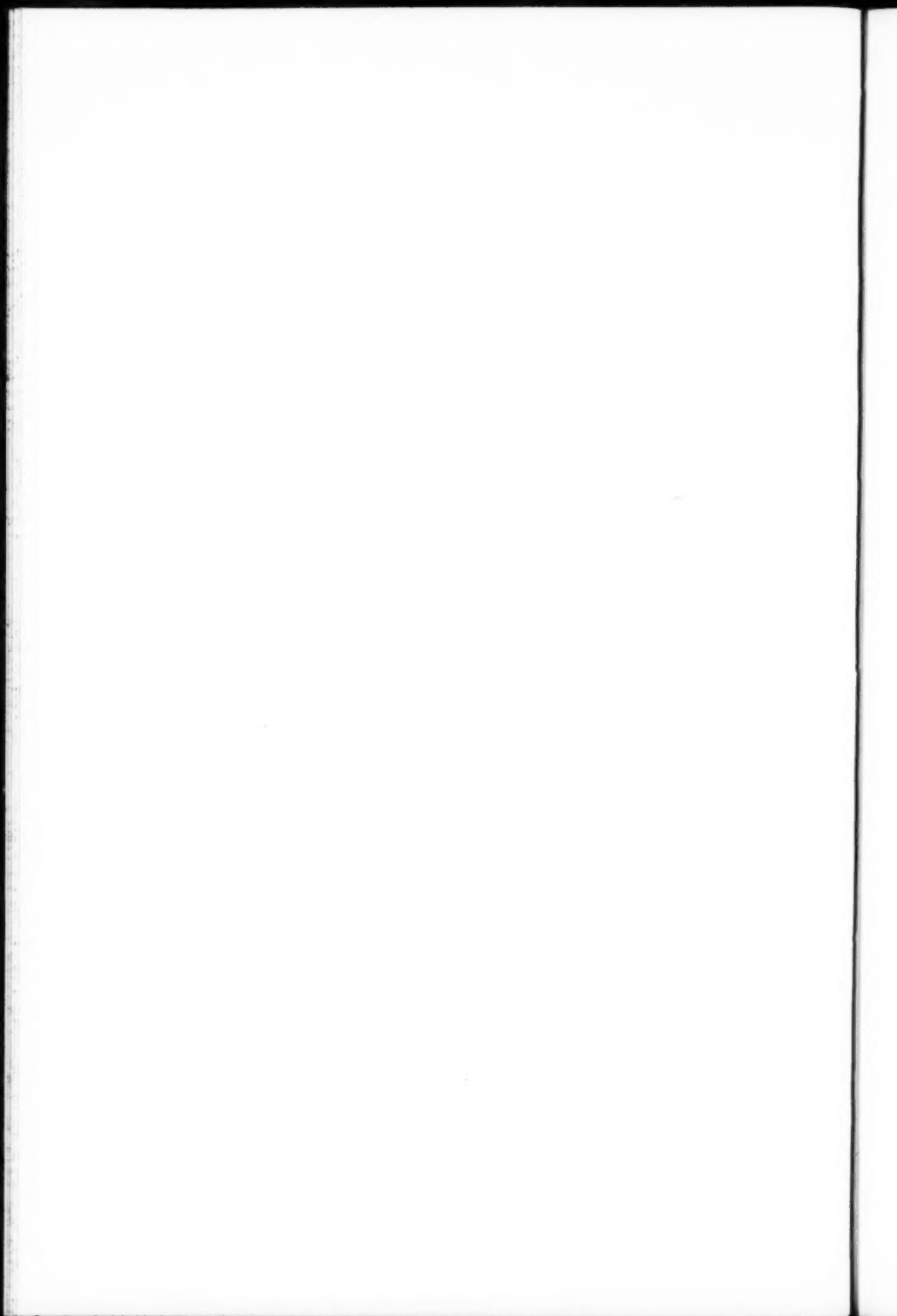
¹ The full Latin title was "Collegium Thomæ Wolsey, Cardinalis Eboracensis."

Cardinal College and its revenues. In spite of remonstrances and entreaties, that great foundation came utterly to an end. The fabric was spared, to delight the eyes of later generations and to keep green the memory of Wolsey; but the income, which was to have been devoted to purposes of piety and learning, served only to enrich a few worthless parasites. In 1532, Henry founded a new college on the old site, called Henry VIII.'s College in Oxford. This was a strictly ecclesiastical foundation, and consisted of no more than a Dean and twelve Canons. No educational duties were assigned to it, and its statutes dealt with no questions except the services of the Church and the management of its property: but it did not last long, being surrendered to the king in 1545.

Three years previous to this, a new Diocese of Oxford had been carved out of the old Diocese of Lincoln, and presented with some of the spoils of the religious houses, which Henry had so diligently suppressed. The Cathedral had been placed at Oseney, outside the city walls, and bore the title of the Cathedral Church of Christ and the Blessed Virgin Mary at Oseney. This was now surrendered to the king on the very same day that he received the surrender of his own College, and he almost immediately set about that union of the Episcopal See with the Collegiate foundation, which has so long been the wonder and despair of the earnest seeker after truth. The result was, and is, Christ Church. Its head was still to be the Dean, not the Bishop; for, though the See was fixed at Christ Church, the Bishop derives his revenues from other sources than those with which Henry endowed his new foundation, and he was assigned no official residence within the walls. The Dean and eight Canons formed the Corporation, having power to manage the property and nominate almost all the members of the foundation. The latter comprised three Regius Professors, in Theology, Hebrew, and Greek (nominated by the king), and 100 Students, students being a general term which would embrace Undergraduates, Bachelors and Masters of Arts, who were supported out of the revenues of the House, and passed on naturally from a lower to a higher grade, as a man might now be promoted from a Scholarship to a Fellowship in his own College without examination. The twenty senior Students, called Theologi, were obliged to enter into Priest's orders within a limited time, or forfeit their studentship; the juniors, Alumni and Discipuli, had no such limitation. Among the "officiarii" for the year 1552 (the first year for which there is a complete list) we find included "two Censors and Readers of Natural and Moral Philosophy respectively"—a partial reversion to the original titles of the disciplinary officers in Wolsey's foundation. The duties of the Censors do not now involve them necessarily in the teaching of either Natural or Moral Philosophy, but the title still survives for official purposes, though in ordinary conversation these high functionaries are known respectively as the Junior and Senior Censor. Such was the consti-



CHRIST CHURCH CATHEDRAL : THE CHOIR



tution of Christ Church, which lasted for more than three hundred years. Changes were made from time to time, but they were not numerous nor, with one exception, vitally important. That exception was the reform introduced by Elizabeth, who in 1561 ordered that at least three Students a year should be elected from St. Peter's College at Westminster, which she had just founded, and so inaugurated a connection between the College and one of the greatest English Public Schools which, though unwelcome at first, and sometimes in late years abused, has brought, at least to Christ Church, an almost unbroken line of able and devoted men, and provided no less than sixteen of its Deans. A hundred years later, "a jovial cavalier," named Thurston, gave, "in a humour by will," £900 for the maintenance of one or more scholars in "King's College, Oxford." Christ Church, though its title was disputed, was finally allowed to have been the college intended in this document, and thus the number of students was brought up to 101. This is why "Tom," the bell in the tower over the great gateway, which is rung every night to warn scholars that the gates will soon be closed, sounds 101 times—once for every student. The custom still survives, though the reason for it no longer exists.

One other gradual alteration may be noticed. The Canonries, which had originally been separate from Professorships, by degrees became attached to them. James I. annexed a Canonry to King Henry's Professor, and Charles I. did the like to the Professor of Hebrew. By an Act of Parliament of 1840 the Margaret Professorship of Divinity was joined to a third Canonry, and the Archdeaconry of Oxford to a fourth; the two new chairs of Pastoral Theology and Ecclesiastical History, founded in 1842, were similarly endowed, while the two remaining stalls were suppressed under the Ordinance of 1858. The Regius Professorship of Greek, which, for nearly three hundred and fifty years, was attached neither to a Canonry nor to a Studentship, has now a Studentship assigned to it by the Statutes of 1882.

Mention has been made of the Ordinance of 1858, drawn up by the executive Commission, which was appointed after the first University Commission of inquiry had done its work. It marks a very important crisis in the history of the College, the first radical change in the constitution since 1561. By it, as we have seen, the number of stalls was reduced from eight to six, and a similar fate awaited the Studentships. There were now to be 80 in all—28 Senior Studentships (practically Fellowships), of which more than half could be held only by men in Holy Orders, and 52 Junior Studentships (Scholarships), of which nearly half were confined to Westminster. The right, hitherto enjoyed by the Chapter, of nomination to Studentships was now abolished. But, as yet, the Senior Students, much as they did for the College, had no share in the management of its property, and were, in no sense, owners of it. "All the surplus Revenues," says the Christ Church report to the first Commission, "are divided among the Dean and Canons, who in this respect resemble the present Fellows of

other colleges, while the Students stand to them in the relation of Scholars." That was true in the fifties, but the same complaint held good in the early sixties. One great improvement had been effected by the Ordinance—the establishment of an Electoral Board, consisting of the Dean, six Canons, and the six Senior Tutors, which controlled the election of Students, all of whom, except the twenty-one who came from Westminster, were to be chosen by open competition. Further reforms were sure to come, and they came. Negotiations were opened between the Students and the Chapter; referees were appointed by both sides, with the result that, in 1867, a new Governing Body, consisting of the Dean, Canons, and Senior Students, sat for the manage-



CHRIST CHURCH : THE HALL.

ment of the College and its estates. The cleavage between this body and the Chapter was complete; the latter was provided with their own funds, and left absolutely unfettered in the administration of the Cathedral, its services and its finances; as a corporation they had no control over the College, but individually they sat as ordinary members in the Governing Body, and had a voice in all its proceedings. This is the Constitution of Christ Church at the present day. Slight changes have been from time to time enacted; for instance, with regard to the number of Students required to be in Holy Orders, and the substitution of the simple title "Students" for "Senior Students," and that of "Scholars" for "Junior Students"; but, for more than thirty

years, the distribution of power has remained practically the same, with no little profit to the Students, and, we trust, with no loss of prestige to the Chapter, or of good government and order to the College itself.

No account of the Constitution of Christ Church would be complete without a word as to the relation between the Chapter and the Bishop of the Diocese. The Dean has always claimed the authority of Ordinary within his Church, and claimed it with success. Even as late as 1853 we find the Dean and Chapter, in an official document, pointing out the difference between them and other similar bodies, and maintaining that their Visitor was not the Bishop, but the Sovereign ;



CHRIST CHURCH : THE SHRINE OF ST. FRIDESWIDE.

indeed, up to this century the Bishop generally received scant courtesy from the Chapter, and in 1783 Bishop J. Butler was actually refused, in the curtest terms, the use of the Chapter House, where he wished to deliver his charge to the candidates for ordination. When Bishop Wilberforce wished to appoint honorary Canons, the Chapter would have been quite within their rights if they had refused to grant him leave, and a century earlier they would certainly have done so. But the suavity of Bishop Wilberforce and the courtesy of Dean Liddell did much to mend matters. The Bishop was allowed to appoint honorary Canons, with certain restrictions, and his successors, with the consent of the Chapter, have continued the practice ever since. The present Bishop regularly

holds his September and Advent ordinations in the Cathedral, and uses the Chapter House for examinations and other similar purposes ; if he does not come at Trinity, his only reason is that Trinity Sunday falls in Term time, and the Cathedral is needed for the College. The handsome throne which commemorates the work of Samuel Wilberforce is a proof of the altered state of things. The Bishop is at last welcome in the Cathedral of his own Diocese.

We have dwelt at length on the constitutional history of Christ Church, both because it is interesting in itself, and because, without some such study, all those apparent anomalies in our College, which at once catch the eye of a stranger, seem inexplicable. Even the buildings can hardly be understood without it. They have been built at such various times, they owe their origin to such various foundations, they have been adapted to such various uses, that, unless we first waded through a little of the history, they would have a very slender meaning for us. And now we may briefly survey them. As we come down St. Aldate's—not Aldgate, as a modern painter quite recently styled it in a catalogue of Oxford paintings—past the west front of the College, which has been the delight of every photographer since photography was known, and of artists at all times, we are struck by the mark which Wolsey has left upon it. The devices which meet our eye “on the corner turrets are the Cardinal’s hat, and the pillars, set saltire-wise, one of Wolsey’s favourite emblems.” We forget, as we are sometimes glad to forget, the second foundation of Henry VIII., and think what Christ Church might have been if Wolsey had been spared to finish his original design. Over the great gate rises “Tom Tower,” planned by Sir Christopher Wren, and now the home of great “Tom,” the bell before alluded to, which once summoned the good people to church at Oseney Abbey, and now performs a less exalted, but not by any means contemptible, task in the city. If the tower is an object of admiration from without, still more so is it from within. From the north-east corner of the quadrangle, by the door of the Deanery, you gain some idea of its glorious proportions: on a frosty night, when the dome sparkles under the moon, there is nothing so fairy-like; on a cloudy evening, when there are only the gas lamps to illuminate it, there is nothing so mysterious in Oxford.

(To be continued.)

IN THE WIND

BY THE EDITOR

THIS summer number of *The Argosy* goes to press on the hottest day of the year. This is, perhaps, as it should be; though as I bring myself to consider things that are "In the wind," I am reminded that it has been made more usual for the so-called Summer Number to appear in early May or June, when the buds are bursting, and the evening chills are at their keenest. But times are changing. Not only are some of the most popular of our Magazines publishing their summer or holiday numbers when the summer is actually at its height, when the holidays are actually here, but I am credibly informed that one of our important publications is preparing a Christmas number to appear at Christmas-time, instead of early in November! I heartily wish well to these daring innovators; not as one of those absurd, unpractical people who do not comprehend the fact that strange theories work out well enough, very frequently, in business, or as one who fails to see the necessity of "taking Time by the forelock," but as one who believes that the old ways are not always the best ways, and that these little things are more often than not a matter of fashion. In any case, there seems to be some natural soundness in the idea that though the summer is not a good period for the solid book, it is the very best time of the year for such reading as a good magazine affords. This issue will indeed reach my readers just when the holidays are in full swing. And I trust that those who find during spare hours in house, hotel, or cottage—

" . . . on hill, in dale, forest, or mead,
Or by the beached margin of the sea "—

any entertainment in these pages, will not fail in kindness to say a good word for a Magazine to which some of the foremost writers of the day find pleasure in contributing.

I must here express my regret on account of the fact that the article, "The Art of Sir Seymour Haden," which I had hoped to insert in this issue, must be held over until next month. The veteran artist, who has promised, "for auld lang syne," some interesting data for this account of his work, was unable to supply them in time for my necessities, and so I am sure that I may count on my readers' indulgence.

* * *

The newspapers will soon be full of the complaints of holiday-makers. We may expect to hear a good deal of the luggage-grievance this summer. A fiat has gone forth from the railway companies in Great Britain to the effect that luggage over a certain weight has to be paid for. Travellers on the Continent know very well what a relief the happy-go-lucky system prevalent in this country with regard to the carriage of personal effects can be. In Europe, generally, you pay heavily for personal baggage. Here, you do not pay anything at all in nine cases out of ten. Away from home, on the other hand, you receive a luggage-check: you are "registered": you are safe. There is a great deal to be said for such a system; and could we but persuade our railway companies to adopt a registration system which would have the merit of economy—lacking, decidedly lacking, across the Channel—we could challenge the world in the convenience of our railway travelling. The companies, alas! have decided upon a step which will only exasperate. Heavy charges are to be made: no security is to be offered. True, our luggage has a wonderful way of getting to its destination, adopting from its owners, doubtless, the useful but unheroic quality of being able to "muddle through." But it is all rather unsatisfactory. Why should we not have a simple and economical method of registration? Here is the idea. Let every passenger who takes baggage be supplied with a registration ticket: sixpence being charged if he has less than two, one shilling if he has more than two packages with him. Thus, for every passenger taking luggage the company will be sure of sixpence at least: and the amount realised will be very large in the course of the year. The tax will not be heavy enough to be resented: on the other hand, the passenger will be far less likely to lose his property than he is by the present method, for the company would provide him with an identification ticket and a receipt all in one, to his infinite comfort at the end of the journey. To the company, also, it would have the effect of a general increase in fares. In fact, it would mean that bliss would manifestly increase all round.

* * *

I have just been reminded of that wonderful and successful movement, which has gained strength enormously of recent years, for taking children and others into the country, sometimes for a day, sometimes for a week, sometimes for a fortnight. It is the more ambitious scheme which has my heartiest sympathy, partly no doubt because I have helped to work it in my time, by way of assisting a clerical friend in the East End of London. It is an anxious business, this holiday-fund work. You have to exhaust your vocabulary, to start with, in the inquiries which must be made. You have to learn something of the principles of charity organisation, which are generally distasteful to the budding philanthropist. And there are the usual red-tape methods, adopted for safety's sake by all

large undertakings, to be learned. The human interest of the work compensates for all the trouble involved, a thousandfold. It is a grand thing to give town children a glimpse of the real country. I have seen them go: I have seen them return. Nothing in the world is more delightful and more refreshing than the knowledge of health given, hope realised, to say nothing of friendships formed in cottage homes. Drawbacks there are, of course, in connection with the work, but though more than twenty thousand children are sent from London each summer for a holiday of a fortnight's duration by one fund alone, complaints and disappointments are extremely rare. Yet think for a moment how barely this touches the fringe of London children in the mass!

* * *

It is not, indeed, for this fund at all that I seek friendly aid through these pages: I seek it rather for the remnant which the big Fund cannot touch: in a word—for the *one-day holiday* children. These do not touch the splendours or realise the possibilities of their brothers and sisters who go away for a whole fortnight: but they are an even greater army, and if help were forthcoming they might be more formidable in numbers still. Two friends of mine (among many others) are always at their wits' end for the necessary funds to carry out their holiday arrangements: it is a big scheme that each one of them has to carry out year by year, and they do not, of course, draw the line at the children. A breath of fresh air for hard-worked mothers, factory girls, and others crushed and pressed by the arduous nature of their labour from year's end to year's end—it is this they try to give: and for this end I think it a privilege to appeal to those who are able to give. The smallest contribution sent to the Editor of *The Argosy*, 156 Charing Cross Road, will be gratefully received. The parishes over which my friends have control are typical of London: both are poor parishes, and in both the self-denying labours of the clergy are very great. The first parish is that of St. Dunstan's, the parish church of Stepney, with twenty-three thousand inhabitants: the second, Holy Cross, St. Pancras, with seven thousand. If any of my readers will send a mite, it will be received by me with grateful thanks, and duly forwarded.

* * *

I must not forget to add that the clergy themselves are frequently unable to indulge in those holidays which are absolutely essential to their health and the proper performance of their labours. I would ask my readers to peruse with careful sympathy the announcement of the Clergy Relief Corporation on this subject, which appears elsewhere within the covers of this Magazine.

* * *

A very delightful book—a book for the summer—lies before me, and as it comes from one of our most loyal Colonies, many here at home will rejoice in its possession. I refer to “A Treasury of Canadian Verse,” lately published by Messrs. J. M. Dent & Co. The editor, Dr. Theodore Rand, has, I regret to learn, not long survived the publication of his work, which includes a large number of delightful songs, ballads, and lyrics. It will be news to a good many people that the popular authoress known as “Sarah Jeanette Duncan” is a writer of verse. She writes very neatly, as these lines will show:—

THE POET.

“O very, very far from our dull earth,
The land where poets spring to glorious birth,
Thrice-blessed land, where brood thrice-happy skies,
Where he increaseth joy who groweth wise ;
Where truth is not too beautiful to see,
Action is music, life a harmony.
There dwells the poet, till some luckless day
Prisons his spirit in our coarser clay,
And in our dull and dusty commonplace
He loses memory of our name and race,—
Till some bird twitters from a wayside thorn
The language of the land where he was born ;
Or west winds, whispering to the tall pine trees,
Waken his soul to wonder ; or he sees
In some first fairness when the day is new,
In some dear dimness in the time of dew,
A loveliness that steals about his heart,
And lays soft fingers on dumb chords that smart.

Then he uprises joyously and binds
His poet's robes upon him ; yea, he finds
This drear existence a most glorious thing,
And sings because he cannot choose but sing.”

There are a good many poems in this volume which I should like to quote ; but time is brief and the printer calls, so I will leave it to the lovers of verse, the lovers of the open air, to procure the volume for themselves.

